

COUNTRY LIFE

VOL. XIV.—No. 343. [REGISTERED AT THE
G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.]

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1st, 1903.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.
BY POST, 6½D.]



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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Our Portrait Illustration: Miss Beatrice Paget	145, 146
The Literature of Sport	146
Country Notes	147
The Exile	149
The Twelfth. (Illustrated)	149
Northern Field Trials	151
Uncle Phil	152
The Latter-day Angler. (Illustrated)	157
The Norfolk Broads	159
English Mezzotints: An Appreciation. (Illustrated)	160
Tintoretto	162
In the Garden	163
The Wreck Harvest. (Illustrated)	164
Gardens Old and New: Stoke Park. (Illustrated)	168
Fishing with the Ghosts	174
The Barn Owl. (Illustrated)	176
After the Wild Red Deer. (Illustrated)	178
Wemmergill Moors: A Good Day in the Shipka Pass. (Illustrated)	180
Shooting Ponies. (Illustrated)	182
Grouse Prospects. (Illustrated)	184
In the Rearing Field. (Illustrated)	185
Partridge Prospects	187
Old Public-house Games. (Illustrated)	188
A Book of the Week	188
From the Farms. (Illustrated)	189
Polo Notes	190
Correspondence	191

EDITORIAL NOTICE.

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THE LITERATURE . . . OF SPORT

OUR columns bear significant witness to the fact that, as soon as the 1st of August approaches, the sportsman's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of game. The shooter is looking to his guns and dogs; the hunter, with his ideas running on the heathery moors of the West, is thinking of horse and hound. In a very few weeks hence, outdoor sports of every kind will be in full activity, and the time, therefore, is very suitable for throwing a retrospective eye over the wide field of literature devoted to this subject. It is a department in which England is peculiarly rich. Since historic times we have, as a nation, been addicted to every description of outdoor recreation, and it is but natural that this characteristic should be reflected in our books. And it is not only in the formal treatise that this proclivity has been enshrined. Our best literature is suffused with the love of sport. Our greatest poet gives internal evidence of being highly conversant with the points of a horse—witness his references throughout the plays, and also that exquisite description in "Venus and Adonis," which is almost as good to-day as it was when written. He seems to have been a falconer, too, from the freedom with which he makes use of the terms employed in falconry. Of dogs he had a perfect knowledge—witness a well-known catalogue of the various breeds existing in his time. Lesser writers than Shakespeare are almost equally full of the love of sport. Scenes drawn from the hunting-field hold a conspicuous place in the novels of Henry Fielding, and Squire Western, the most perfect of his creations, was a typical outdoor English landowner, while the adorable Sophia, type of all that was best in the womanhood of that time, hunted and was an open-air girl. We do not

know of a single hero of Sir Walter Scott's who was not also a sportsman, and that a man should be able to fly a hawk, ride a horse, and shoot well with a gun appears to have been, in his eyes, as essential as the additional virtue which the Spartans cultivated—that of speaking the truth. If we come a little lower down the ladder, we find hundreds of imaginative books whose sole claim to attention is their rendering of the scenes of sport.

The set work on any sporting subject, however, has less chance of winning immortality than the poem or story into which sport, as it were, has been introduced by a side wind. The conditions under which sport is conducted, and the implements employed in it, vary so much from time to time, that the practical book, which admirably serves the purpose of one generation, is obsolete before the next comes on the scene. Only now and then, by reason of some exceptional skill in treatment, or other cause, does a book of this kind survive the common fate. The instance that we think of most readily is that of Father Izaak. His "Compleat Angler" is not of much service to the fisherman of to-day, but the book itself is a treasure of the library because into its descriptions of fish and fishing Walton managed to bring the aroma of the hayfield, the poetry of the country-side. Other works, such, for instance, as Dame Juliana Berners' "Boke of St. Albans," get made curiosities of, and so achieve another kind of immortality; but the great mass of books on sport are dead and gone in a comparatively short space of time. Nor can we wonder at it, since human invention is being continually directed to improving the weapons which are employed. To take one very striking example, the beautiful works written to instruct beginners in the art of shooting with the crossbow can have only an antiquarian interest for those who wield a breech-loader, and to whom a muzzle-loading gun is a curiosity and a flint-gun prehistoric. That is an example of change well-nigh amounting to revolution, but it would be easy to cite many minor alterations that have produced the same effect in kind if not in degree. To continue the illustration of shooting, the improvement of guns, the invention of new powders, and the discovery of more effective means of rearing game, preserving it in coverts, and bringing it to the gun in a sportsman-like manner, render a book well-nigh obsolete in ten or fifteen years, admirably as it may have served its purpose when first brought out. Anyone who will consider what changes have been effected, for instance, in such a sport as shooting, will quite readily admit that in twenty years a book is bound to change from an effective hand-book into a mere literary record and monument of information become obsolete. Practical exemplification of this fact will, we think, be found in the "Library of Sport," which we are bringing out under the editorship of our distinguished contributor, Mr. Horace G. Hutchinson. It has been a delight to him, and a delight even to some of us who have been mere "lookers on at Venice," to collect information about the latest things done in the world of sport, and to enlist in our service not only those who have had a long career in the field, but some of the younger sportsmen who are full to overflowing with the modern spirit and the most modern methods of killing game. The delight has arisen from more than one cause. It will be found that the volumes are illustrated with two sets of pictures, one of which is typified by the old engraving that gives you a scene of sport as it was witnessed by our grandfathers, the other by the instantaneous photograph, which, as it were, transfers to the pages of a written book the shooter of to-day. Past and present are therefore placed in agreeable contrast, and the descriptions of shooting are drawn from the most famous shots of the moment, and from the estates where the best bags are made.

In regard to cricket, the case is somewhat different. Cricket is one of those games associated most closely with the individuals who play it, and these are figures continually streaming across the stage. The county team of this year compared with that of the year before is almost certain to have at least one new face, and in the course of a generation it completely alters. That is true in regard to the whole world of cricket. For a longer time than occurred in the case of any other player, Dr. W. G. Grace dominated the field. He is still with us, and hale and strong, we are glad to say; but even his burly figure must succumb at last to the chaser who is behind all of us, and who sometimes goes by the name of "Anno Domini." Thus every cricket book is a reflection of its own age of cricketers, and must continue to have a certain interest on that account, though the new book with its more recent chronicle and recent players will always be the one sought for by practical cricketers.

Our Portrait Illustration.

MISS BEATRICE PAGET is the subject of our frontispiece this week. Miss Paget is the daughter of the late Sir Alexander Victor Paget, third son of the Marquess of Anglesey, and Lady Alexander Paget, daughter of the second Viscount Combermere.



THE King's visit to Ireland, which came to a conclusion on Monday night, has been a brilliant success from every point of view. It was feared for a time that some gloom would be cast on it in a country so fervently Catholic as Ireland by the death of the Pope. Happily the apprehension proved to be ill-founded. Regret at the death of a man who has passed his ninety-fourth year cannot possibly be so keen and poignant as it would have been when he was in his prime. Venerated as the Pope most properly was, he had reached his appointed hour, and grief at his death was not suffered to interfere with the welcome given to the Royal party. Everywhere the Irish showed themselves most cordial and loyal subjects, and it is scarcely possible to believe in the terrorism that went on twenty years ago as we read of the King's reception to-day. Alike in Dublin, Belfast, and the other places he went to, his welcome was all that a Sovereign could desire.

To our mind the most, or one of the most, interesting events of the journey occurred at Dublin, when the King paid a visit to a wretched and poverty-stricken district of the city to see the model dwellings that have been erected by the generosity of Lord Iveagh and others. King Edward, with a Royal confidence in the people, while driving through the heart of the Coombe district—one of the poorest in Dublin—dismissed his escort altogether, and, after going with Mr. Wyndham, Lord Dudley, Lord Iveagh, and Lord Plunket to visit the houses that had been put up, walked the rest of the way on foot. He is very particularly interested in the new housing scheme, and examined all the different rooms and so on with the most minute care. Long ago he had, while Prince of Wales, developed a great desire to see the poor people on the estate at Sandringham thoroughly well housed, and it is well known that ever since the subject has had great attractions for him. He had an opportunity of studying it in Dublin under conditions which can scarcely exist elsewhere, and took full advantage of it. This is the sort of thing that we think will in the end make him as dear to his Irish subjects as he is to those of Great Britain.

The Pope's will was published at the end of last week, and proves to be a document such as we might very fairly have expected to come from his personality. Though dated 1900, it was written in a distinct, regular hand that showed no sign of weakness, and the provisions are such as might have been drawn up by a man in the prime of life. Briefly, Leo XIII. bequeaths the family patrimony to his nephew, Count Ludovico Pecci. The rest of the property, having come to him through the investiture of the Pontificate, he makes the absolute property of the Holy See, and the execution of the will is entrusted to the four Cardinals. The great Pope has made a worthy exit from the scene of his life's labours. He was buried with all the splendid pageantry and formality that the Roman Catholic Church deems suitable to such an occasion, and that would be ridiculous in any other Church but this—in any other Church except the solitary one that has a genius for ceremony.

It is very difficult to say anything about a bye-election without trenching on politics, but that at Barnard Castle really requires someone to say that it has no bearing whatever on the issues of the moment. Mr. Henderson was the agent of his predecessor, and has long been known to the constituency and been popular in it. The main fact revealed by the contest was that the issue, Free Trade *versus* Preferential Tariffs, has not yet been grasped by the provinces. Those who conducted the electioneering of the three candidates united in saying that this question had no interest whatever. The fact is very curious and significant, not politically, but from a social standpoint. It shows what a chasm there still is between the life and thought of London and the life and thought of the provinces. For weeks past everybody in the metropolis has been almost sickened with arguments for and against. Yet it is an undeniable

fact that a great electorate like that of Barnard Castle has not yet felt the importance of the discussion. Most likely the electors will not do so until the proposals of the Colonial Secretary are put before them in a definite and concrete form.

"All hands to the pump!" is a cry which seems to be more appropriate to a sinking ship than a newspaper office, but those journals which have the misfortune to have offices in the classic neighbourhood of the Temple found to their cost on Sunday that baling-out appears to be as necessary in their holds as in those of a liner. Tudor Street, from the time of morning till long past that for evening service, was a mass of steam-engines puffing and extracting water from the engine-rooms of the newspaper offices which have been built on a great scale there during recent years. No one who had not seen it could have believed that such a quantity of water could have got in. In one part of the *Express* office the water was said to be twelve feet deep, and the supply for some hours was more than constant. The flooding appears to point to very bad management in some quarter or another, and deserves full enquiry from those who are responsible for the drainage system. As most people know, a little brook ran down Fleet Street in olden time, and it now does so, but by a subterranean channel, and the mischief is said to have arisen from its becoming flooded. In that there does not seem anything which science could not remedy, only the chances are that a vast amount of money will be spent in precautionary measures against an eventuality that may not occur again for the next half-century.

Some ill-feeling has been caused by the fact that the Fire Brigade refused to go to the rescue. The official who was consulted held that the duty of this body was absolutely confined to fire, and although much damage to property and direct loss might have been avoided, he would not allow the engines to go out, and the water was therefore allowed to accumulate till the forlorn newspaper people were able to obtain pumping-engines. We cannot help thinking that the Fire Brigade official took a somewhat red-tape and formal view of their position. They exist for the purpose of saving life and property, and as in Tudor Street they would have been in free telephonic communication with the whole of their district, it will seem to most reasonable men that they might have strained a point and gone to the rescue. The situation was an uncommon and a very difficult one, and at such times ordinary rules ought not to be too rigidly adhered to. We have red tape enough, surely, in all the Government offices, and it is a pity that it should strangle the efficiency of the Fire Brigade also.

PERSEPHONE TO APHRODITE.

When you the far Olympian heights did shun
To seek the love of him the wood-nymphs reared—
Adonis—greatly for his life you feared
As from your breast he rose to greet the sun,
And in the wildwood chase the boar. Undone
Were you with woe when you the thicket neared
And found him slain. Your feet by blind love steered
Crimsoned white roses ere to him you won.
Your wail has grown a burden in mine ears
That sounds through all the stillness of the Shades;
No more my prompting note the cuckoo hears;
Your shadow blights my young unsheathed blades.
Lest you make barren grove and mead and field
My Love to you for half the year I yield.

ELIZABETH GIBSON.

Journalists, but in particular the sub-editorial journalist, is likely to read with mild surprise the deliverance of Mr. Justice Joyce in the action brought by Mr. George Springfield against the *Evening Standard*. The former is a journalist who, it appears, had contributed a short account of the escape of a professor from drowning. The enterprising sub-editor of our evening contemporary "annexed" the paragraph, but rewrote it for his journal, whereupon, says Mr. Justice Joyce, the said sub-editor became the owner of the copyright. If this ruling is to be logically applied it will produce some curious results, especially in those journals where it is customary to rewrite the articles sent in by contributors. Suppose, to take a typical example, that a very great expert, with little literary faculty, is asked to write on the subject best known to him. The chances are all in favour of his not being able to find appropriate words for his story, and in an intelligently-conducted journal the matter would be entirely rewritten, but it seems a curious justice that would make the person who rewrote it owner of the copyright. That, however, appears to be the natural conclusion to be drawn from the case.

It must be said that the people who robbed a garden at Enfield the other day were let down very easily, the men being fined 5s. each and the boys only admonished. Their offence was a most singular one. Someone had put about the rumour that the produce on a sewage-farm was to be given

away, whereupon, on Sunday, about a hundred of the credulous natives—men, women, and children—overran the farm, and filled boxes and bags, and even barrows, with some tons of potatoes, peas, cabbages, and other garden produce. Out of the crowd only four people—two adults and two boys—were brought to justice, and they made the ingenuous excuse that everybody believed the news of the farmer's generosity. Fortunately the tenant is really the Edmonton District Council. Had it been a private person, these proceedings would have gone a long way towards ruining him.

Glasgow is earning an ill-fame for itself as the scene of many railway accidents, and that which occurred on Monday is as serious as any reported for a long time. No fewer than fifteen people were killed, and many were injured. It makes a tragic ending to that annual "Saturnalia," the Glasgow Fair holiday. The train concerned was one that had come up from Ardrossan, one of the many popular places down the Clyde, and was laden with poor people who were returning from their annual few days' excursion to the seaside. There does not seem to have been much doubt of the cause of the catastrophe. The train, coming into a bay, failed to draw up in time, and ran with terrific force against the buffer-stops at the end of the platform. An onlooker describes the result as follows: "There was the crash and tear of rending woodwork, and it was seen that the second carriage had for nearly three-fourths of its length been smashed to splinters between the rebounding engine and the carriage in front." It is a very dreadful occurrence, and we hope that the Glasgow authorities will take strenuous measures to reduce the number of accidents happening in their town.

The extraordinary run to Brighton achieved the other day appears to show that steam is not going to give in to electricity without a fight for it. It is a hint of the acceleration of speed promised by the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway when the doubling of the Brighton main line is completed. A train of three Pullman cars and two brakes, weighing 125 tons, beat all previous records of running on the line. Mr. Richardson, the assistant locomotive engineer, was on the engine superintending. The run was a very extraordinary one, fifty-one and a-half miles being covered in forty-eight and a-half minutes, or seven and a-half minutes inside the previous record. The passengers say that there was very little oscillation, and the journey was made quite comfortably. It is evident that should anyone attempt to lay a new track to Brighton he would have to throw down the glove to a formidable competitor.

During the height of the touring season it is a pity that those who have the care of old and interesting churches do not leave them open. The majority of them are guarded much too jealously, and the curious stranger whose roaming on foot, on bicycle, or in motor-car has brought him to the vicinity of a church that he would like to visit, from motives either religious or antiquarian, usually finds the door locked. Why it should be so it is not easy to say. The people who are attracted to churches are not usually of the kind who "nick the spoons," and even if there were more risk attached to it, there is much to be said in favour of keeping the house of God at all times open. A sprinkling of clergymen fully recognise their responsibility in regard to this, and have the doors kept open at all times. Nor have we ever heard that they suffered in any way. If a burglar were desirous of raiding a church, the locks and keys of most of them would offer a very slight impediment to the fulfilment of his desire.

An interesting Parliamentary Paper has been issued showing the proportion in which England, Scotland, and Ireland contribute to the revenue of the United Kingdom. It makes very short work of the contention which used to be commonly made on behalf of the Irish, that Ireland contributed more than her fair share. The figures work out as follows: For the year ending March 31st, 1903, the total revenue raised by the three countries was £156,606,000, and after local expenditure had been met there remained for Imperial purposes £107,089,000. Of the total revenue England contributed 82.77 per cent., Scotland 10.71 per cent., and Ireland 6.52 per cent. If the population be taken as a basis to work on, the burden of the Imperial expenditure falls as follows: England £3 per head, Scotland £2 12s., and Ireland 12s. 9d. These are very interesting figures for the Government to have worked out, and it will be important to observe what use is made of them by the Irish Nationalists, who have a way of using all figures to prove that they only constitute a new wrong to the "ould country."

The weather is becoming a very grave topic of conversation in the country. It was hoped that it might clear up in July, in which case the grain crops might have recovered some of the ground lost during the early part of the year; but after the longest day has passed the opportunities become fewer and

fewer, and grain that is not well on its way by the first week of August is not likely to make much of a harvest. The fact seems to be that we are in the midst of one of those phenomenally wet seasons which at intervals occur in our English climate, and leave an evil remembrance behind them. Such a year as this is, 1879 was, and it ever stands out more conspicuously as the beginning of that long agricultural depression which we have not got the better of even yet. The wetness of 1903 cannot possibly have such ill effects, for the simple reason that there is not so much to destroy, but it seems in a fair way to leave behind it a reputation not incomparable to that of 1879.

One of the most curious features in the Agricultural Returns for 1902 is the insight they afford into the area of land devoted to market gardens in London. Within the metropolitan area 215 acres are devoted to the growing of small fruit. This is a larger acreage than is devoted to the same industry in Wilts, Dorset, or Salop. The fact is a very curious one, and the more so because gardens of less than an acre in extent are not taken into account. A very natural thought is that the land within the metropolitan area must be in such demand for building purposes that it would not be considered profitable to devote it to the cultivation of apples, cabbages, and lucerne, which are the favourite crops grown. On the other hand, the huge crowd of customers, four-footed and two-footed, in the metropolis probably render it worth while to make a special effort to feed them. The horses alone must require as much food as those of a considerable army.

No sooner is the work of rearing game birds beginning to approach completion than sinister little paragraphs begin to appear in the newspapers concerning affrays with poachers. We have noticed several within the last few days. It was thought some years ago that the crime of taking game illicitly was decreasing, but the falling-off appears to have been purely temporary in character, and many landowners complain that poaching is now done more systematically and on a larger scale than they have ever known before. This is exactly what might be expected from the changes that have taken place. The tendency lies all towards getting game closer together and in larger numbers, so that great bags may be obtained in a sporting manner, but this undoubtedly gives facilities to the poacher, and it would be well if landowners, acting on the well-known dogma that prevention is better than cure, would take the proper steps to baffle him. Even the precaution of bushing is not adopted to anything like the extent it ought to be.

The statistics of the longevity of animals may not be very accurate, but are interesting reading. Among the larger species of cattle there is some approach to uniformity. Thus for the horse and ass the extreme limit is about thirty-five years, and for horned cattle about thirty. For the dog it is given as twenty-five, while sheep, goats, pigs, and cats are grouped at fifteen. Amongst birds the disparities in length of life are very remarkable. While a goose may live to be thirty years of age, a sparrow twenty-five, and a crow a hundred, ducks, hens, and turkeys die of old age at twelve. The palm for longevity is divided between the elephant and the parrot, which both often pass the century. The swan and eagle are very long-lived.

According to Reuter, who is not over and above given to invention, a match, or, it may be, a series of matches, has been arranged between Shamrock I. and the Columbia. This will be a very sporting affair from every point of view, and whichever side wins the America Cup, it will give the other a chance of avenging defeat. It is the firm opinion of a great many shrewd judges, British and American, that Shamrock I. was always a better boat than Shamrock II.; that Shamrock I., moreover, is at least as good as, and probably better than, she was when defeated in the America Cup contests. On the other side of the Atlantic they have never in modern times succeeded in building a racing cutter so consistently successful over a number of seasons as the Britannia on this side, but the Columbia has proved herself clearly a very fast and consistent performer. She has lasted better, too, than the Constitution. The duel between the Columbia and Shamrock I. will, of course, be thrown into the shade by the *furor* aroused over the Cup contest, but it is none the less going to be a duel of more than passing interest, for it will assuredly settle several debatable points, and answer not a few questions that yachtsmen the world over have for years been asking themselves.

The hay harvest in the South of England has been, on the whole, a good one, but it has been all too short. The crop has been excellent over almost the whole of England, by the reports, and in the Midlands and the North the making and the carrying of the hay have suffered little interference. In the South, however, while there was haymaking weather just at the right time for the saving of the bulk of the crop, both those who cut a week too early and those who cut a week too late

suffered from downpours of thundery rain. It was emphatically a case of making hay while the sun shone, but the misfortune is that it is not always easy to get the requisite labour, and the whole of the crop in a grass-growing county cannot be saved all at one time, no matter how favourably the sun be shining. Still, on the whole, haymakers have done well.

Mr. Eustace Miles won the Gold Prize for tennis, beating Sir Edward Grey by three sets to love. It was a thoroughly well-deserved win. No man has worked harder than Mr. Miles to secure the position he has won in tennis, and no man is a more triumphant justification of his own peculiar theories of feeding and training. They might not suit everybody, but undoubtedly they do suit Mr. Miles. His sustained activity in the court is a constant source of wonder to the spectator, as it must be of exasperation to the opponent, when he gets up and returns, with plenty of sting and with accuracy of aim, balls which many a good player would despair of reaching at all. Against an opponent of this force Sir Edward Grey, comparatively untrained, made a very gallant fight, for the games and the sets were more closely contested than the summarised result of three to love in Mr. Miles's favour seems to indicate. After the match for the prize, two sets were played with Sir Edward Grey receiving half-fifteen, and at these short odds he won one set, but lost the other. Considering how many and various are his avocations, it is remarkable how well he keeps his game going.

The shooting of "flappers"—young wild duck—will be beginning directly, and the birds ought to give good shots. The question seems rather to be whether the shots will not be a little

too good. It is curious that, while almost every wild thing is late this year, the wild duck have been uncommonly early. By the middle of July there were young ducks in the South of England that had been able to fly for six weeks—and many of them. Naturally the duck is not affected by water; but the spring, except for an occasional week, was so cold that it is a wonder to find anything at all forward. It is certain, however, that when the shooting of the young wild duck comes there will be found to be more "fly" than "flap" about them. It appears, on the other hand, that the swans have had by no means so good a season, for the King's swan-markers on the Thames report that the cygnets are less numerous than usual, and attribute the decrease to the floods. But then the Thames Valley has been especially favoured in this respect.

There is great news of the rainbow trout in the Buckingham Palace water. Lord Denbigh, who put them in, has gone a-fishing, and he has caught one, on a Black Hackle, of nearly ten ounces weight and eleven inches in length, in the "pink of condition." London is a wonderful city; there seems no form of life with which its carbonised atmosphere fails to agree. And the rainbow trout is a wonderful fish.

All who are interested in the relief expedition to the Antarctic seas in aid of the Discovery will be very well satisfied with the appointment of Captain Harry Mackay as its commander. Captain Mackay was skipper of the Terra Nova when she was a whaling-ship, and has had further experience of ice work as master of Mr. Barclay Walker's Arctic yacht, the Eskimo, which is now out with the Ziegler Polar expedition. The Terra Nova is fitting out at Dundee, which was her port as a whaler.

THE EXILE.

It is not when the seamew cries above the grey-green foam
Or circling o'er the bracken-fields the fluttering lapwings fly,
Or when above the broom and gale the lark is in his windy home
That thus I long, and with old longings sigh.

For I am over-waters and have no time for sighing,
For sighing and for longing, where the grey houses stand.
In dreams I am a seamew flying, flying, flying,
Beating up the wind to my own lost land.

It is when in the crowded streets the rustling of white willows
And tumbling of a brown hill-water obscure the noisy ways;
Then is the ache a bitter pain; and to hear grey-green billows,
Or the hill-wind in a broom-sweet place.

FIONA MACLEOD.

ANTICIPATIONS OF THE TWELFTH.

THE Twelfth of August is a day of keen delights, but one, no less, of keen anxieties. It is long, in all probability, since the shooter has fired his gun. It may be that he has had a preliminary canter at rabbits or "flapper" wild duck, but the chances are that he comes new to the old work on the Twelfth, with the beginning of the grouse shooting. The gun feels an unfamiliar thing. He is a little doubtful whether something dreadful may not have happened to its mechanism during all the summer idleness. If he is a nervous man, he may be relieved when the first shot is fired to find that the barrel has not burst. Then there is all the strangeness about the aspect of the grouse. The man's mental vision has lost them. He cannot tell whether the bird that is to rise before him from the heather is to loom large as an eagle or evade him, tiny as a humming-bird. The latter alternative is the one that he rather expects. Then there is the problem whether there will be any grouse at all, that is to say, grouse enough to be worth mentioning and to make a decent bag. That is a doubt that is never solved until the Twelfth. It is far from being fully solved then, especially if it be on a moor where driving is the vogue from the commencement of operations. Where dogs are used, their noses may be relied on to find birds a good deal better than the beaters.

This year it is pretty certain that the birds will be in most localities backward, as certain, that is to say, as any point in the grouse history of the year can be until the season is a little advanced. And the result of a backward year is, in the first place, that many of the grouse, being immature, are very

difficult to flush the first time over by beaters, so that on a driving moor they do not get up at all. This creates the impression that there are very few birds, and it is possible enough that the impression may be perfectly accurate. The birds may not be there. On the other hand—the more agreeable alternative—that they are there, but are playing the "Brer Rabbit" game of "lying low," is possible too, and in that case, although they may make no show on the first time of driving, on the second time over, having made up their arrears of growth in the interval, they may come on to the guns and surprise everybody by the good stock. This was conspicuously the case on a good many moors last year, where the birds seemed so few at first, and yet went on apparently increasing in numbers, the more that were shot, all the season through.

The present year is one of peculiar anxiety about the stock of birds, because accounts are so very contradictory. The general impression prevails that it is to be a "patchy" grouse year, and, generally speaking, below the average.

The first shot of the season is quite a solemn occasion to very many of us. There are not a few who hold a superstitious belief that its result is to be taken as an omen of the gunner's performances throughout the season. One very fine pheasant shot we know who will on no account fire his first shot in the day at a pheasant that he can fail to kill, his theory being that if he should miss this first shot he is only too likely to go on missing—a thing, it may be said, which he never does. Presumably, if this is his theory about the first shot for the day, he ought to be three hundred and sixty-five times more particular about the first shot

for the year—that is to say, for the season. Luckily the grouse, getting up before the dog and flying gently over the heather, is not a bird that we ought to miss, even on the first annual attempt; and after that first effort it is surprising how quickly all concerned—guns, keepers, dogs, even grouse—are apt to settle down to work, just as if there had been no summer interval to interrupt it.

Where the moor is a “dogging” one, or, as many are, one on which dogs are used for a week or two and birds are then driven, a fresh cause for anxiety is introduced. How will the dogs behave? Perhaps there is some youngster who never has seen a grouse before. That ought not to be. A young dog ought to have been taken out on the moor and made familiar with the scent of grouse before the Twelfth, even if his breaking has been to the less intoxicating scent of the Lowland partridge. But apart from the young dogs, who always are liable to run riot—in fact, many a breaker will tell you that a dog is not likely to be of much use unless he shows a little youthful wildness—the first day’s shooting is a trying experience, even to the morals of the veterans, when they have been undermined by the influence of spring and summer holidays. Their exuberance is hardly to be restrained. The scent of the skylark, always attractive, is apt to beguile their noses, which are out of practice; perhaps the young brood of the grey hen, running in the heather, will tempt the steadiest of the dogs, too, to run in. It is a trying day, though of untold delights.

No man can really get a full enjoyment out of watching the work and demeanour of dogs unless he has a sense of humour and a sympathy for their various dispositions. If all dogs were

built on the same mental and moral plan, shooting over them would not be nearly so interesting, even if the plan were perfect. One of the delights of the Twelfth, on a dogging moor, is watching the demeanour of the dogs; you see them at that time peculiarly stripped of the veneer of education; you see the original sin constantly threatening to break through and riot you see the temptation, the resistance—sometimes successful, sometimes a failure; and then you see the various manners of the dogs. There is the old dog, the cynic, who has seen so many

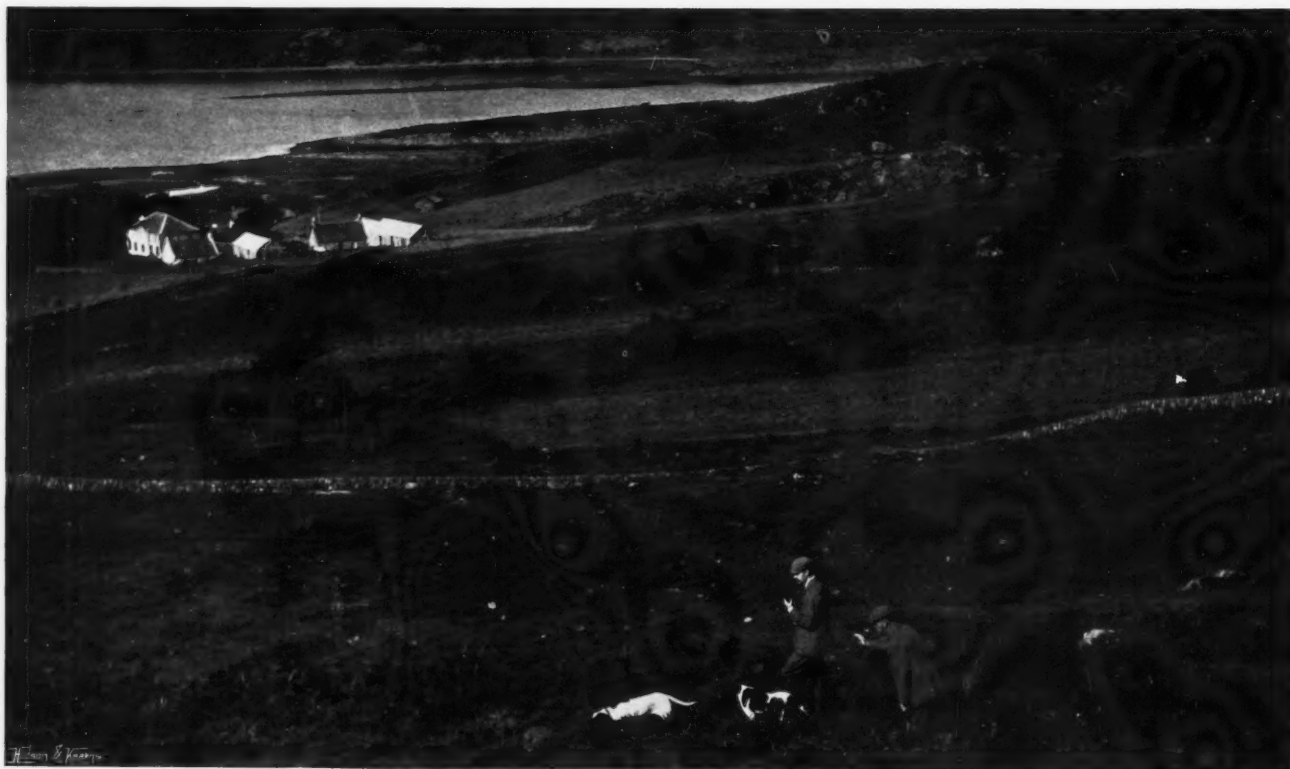
Twelfths that they have virtually lost their novelty and their temptations for him. The temptations leave him untouched. So he takes up the superior attitude of one who looks down from a super-canine elevation on all the dogs that are more easily led astray, dogs with whom the educated habit is not yet so strong as to have become instinctive. He has all the disgusted air of one who says, when he sees the kennel inclined to riot, “Oh, what in the name of Cerberus is all this fuss and nonsense about? Don’t you know that the Twelfth of August comes as a matter of course every year of our lives?” The other dogs must hate him, to be sure, for his superior attitude; but a true cynic does not mind this—it gives him satisfaction. And then you see the would-be sinner who wants, terribly badly, to dash in and have a snap at the birds’ tails as they get up from the heather. He is even now stealing in upon the birds, when the keeper’s “Have a care!” recalls him to a sense of duty, and he becomes as if transfixed again—a figure moulded in hard metal. Then there is the other sinner—probably of younger, more impetuous blood than the last—“the sinner that did,” not merely the “would-be.” Him we may see obviously counting the cost, asking himself



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AN ANXIOUS MOMENT.

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“HAVE A CARE!”

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whether it is worth while, finally and joyously making up his mind, and concluding, "Yes, just this once!" and off he dashes, amuck, into the middle of the astounded covey, without the slightest heed of the keeper's adjurations, oburgations, or whatever words in long syllables may most euphoniously suggest what sometimes is called, tersely, "language." Then when the snapper has had his fling, has run himself out of breath, and put up every grouse within five gunshots, he becomes the penitent saint, with tail between his legs, crouching over the leather, returning to what he knows to be the well-deserved purgatory. He has counted the cost, and pays it handsomely, like the man in the Western States handing up to the judge a surplus over and above the fine imposed upon him on conviction, and saying, "Here, fine me five dollars for contempt of court."

Sometimes you may have anxieties and interests not connected with the dogs at all, in teaching a young idea of the human description to shoot. The Twelfth, the beginning of the season, when birds are not too strong and wild, is the time for him. Be careful with him, too, that the shot he first fires shall be one that he has a reasonable chance of killing, for perhaps it is not only the first shot of the season with him, but it may be the first effort of his shooting life at so noble a quarry as the grouse. So do not let any ill omen be conveyed by any mischance in this.

So far as the grouse go, the keeper's anxieties are in a measure at an end when the Twelfth comes. At all events they are altered. Previously as he went over the moor it has happened to him to light now and again on the corpse of a bird and to have to put to himself the dread question of diagnosis, "Is it disease?" That is a very grave question, in view of his responsibility to his master in the South for the condition of the moor. But now, though he has his troubles about his dogs and his beaters, he can do, and he need say, no more about the grouse; the master can see and judge for himself; so long as the keeper can feel he has done his best he need not worry any further. The issue is out of his hands. All this and very much more is in the keeping of the glorious Twelfth.

NORTHERN . . FIELD TRIALS.

THE series of Pointer and Setter Field Trials ended for this year with the International Gun-Dog League's meeting on Invereshie by Kingussie, in Inverness-shire, on July 24th. Never before have shooters gone quite so far North for a big meeting, although in the seventies there was an autumn field trial on the Auchleeks Moors in Perthshire, a few miles from Struan. It was very successful, as also the last has been; but the Scotch proprietors neither then nor now entered in great strength. On this last occasion a few of them have been represented, as, for instance, Sir John Sterling Maxwell, who is a great sportsman, and is forming a strong kennel of dogs.

Perhaps the principal feature of the late trials in Inverness-shire was the very large entry in the All-aged Stakes. People have taken to entering their puppies amongst the old animals, and so give the former a double chance of victory. This habit has been growing, and has culminated in a stake of twenty-eight old and young. Possibly field-trial committees in future will reflect that this makes the trials somewhat unmanageably large, and curtails the

length of time to be given to each dog, so that results are more chance work than they need be with fewer entries. It would not be well to bar puppies in the All-aged Stakes, but it might possibly be worth while to consider whether those entered amongst the puppies should be permitted to show again in another stake.

The winning brace in the stake for pairs of dogs belonging to one owner were the same that secured premier honours in the spring at the English Setter Club and at the National Meetings. These were Mr. Elias Bishop's Master Pedro and Bang Pedro, a well-matched brace in point of style and range, and well broken, too. They are not as flashy or as fast as some, but the consistency of their work is obvious from their three consecutive victories.

The second brace were supplied by Mr. F. C. Lowe; another English Setter Club victor was one of them, for Bishop of Bobbing came out top in the All-aged Single Stakes on that occasion. This dog's companion in the brace was a puppy

called Brake Faskally—one that we think Mr. Lowe secured at a late sale at Aldridge's for a very low figure, once more proving that field-trial victories can often be commanded by a nod to the auctioneer. Bishop of Bobbing is not a racer, but he has got a nose and is able to use it, and in thus carrying on his back, as it were, a puppy to a place in the Brace Stakes, he has accomplished a quite remarkable performance—one that does credit even to Mr. F. C. Lowe's long experience and clever handling.

Twenty-one puppies contended; and again most of them had figured in the spring, although they reversed positions. The ten dogs that were selected by Colonel C. H. Beck and Mr. C. J. B. Macpherson to do business in the second round had mostly been seen in the spring. Mr. G. H. Baxter's pointer, Hutton Rocket, second in the Field-Trial Derby, had to meet Colonel C. T. Cotes's Pitchford Bang. The latter owner's other pointer, Pitchford Ranger, was pitted against Mr. Elias Bishop's pointer, General Pedro. Mr. F. C. Lowe's Brake Faskally (just successful in the stake for braces) had to meet Captain H. Heywood Lonsdale's setter, Ightfield Pinfire, and Mr. H. Sawtell's pointer, Melksham Bragg, was drawn with the most successful puppy of this or of many seasons, Mr. Warwick's English setter, Compton

Bounce. However, his colours were to be lowered, though not very much, by a dog that did not come out in the spring. The honours of the meeting were very evenly divided, but if any particular strain shone above the rest it was that of the old field-trial champion, Faskally Bragg, crossed with Colonel Cotes's well-known sort of pointers. The latter shooter was now successful in securing first puppy prize with Pitchford Bang, bred in that way from his nice bitch Circe, and in this same stake there ran Mr. H. Sawtell's Melksham Bragg from the same litter, a puppy also, therefore, and one that was destined to turn the tables on most of the old ones in the All-aged Stakes. Second to Bang was the clever Compton Bounce, and third fell to Mr. Elias Bishop's General Pedro.

Bearing out the remark just made, Colonel Cotes had two pointer puppies, Bang and Ranger, in the stake for juveniles, and he also thought Ranger, but not Bang, good enough to contest the all-aged event and beat the old dogs; but Ranger was not placed in either stake, whereas Bang came to the



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RESTING.

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top amongst puppies. So much for luck, when the owners do not know which is the most likely to win amongst their own lot. Bang, moreover, did not run at this year's National trials, whereas Ranger represented the kennel unsuccessfully.

There was a remarkable lot of pointers and setters in the All-aged Stakes, most of them being previous winners of stakes, and six amongst them puppies. Many of the competitors were also in the same stake of 1902. Then Colonel Cotes won with his most beautiful bitch, Pitchford Druce; she has since had a litter of puppies, which generally takes a good bit of vitality away, and on this occasion she declined to back, which is serious, and got no further. Ightfield Gaby ran last year, and might have won had he been obedient to whistle, and this year his brilliant work made him dangerous again, but he was not quite as much a model of behaviour as when he won at Bala some years ago. He is a beautiful English setter, one of classic mould, with the poetry of motion. He has, too, an excellent nose, but on this occasion got no higher than third, and his kennel companion, Ightfield Duke, is always in the money. Last year he was second; this season he was fourth.

Duke is not quite such a handsome dog as Gaby, and has not quite the capacity for game finding either; but it is always a very lucky, as well as a good, dog that has much the better of him. Melksham Bragg, the second prize winner, divided third in the National at Shrewsbury in the spring in the stake for pointer puppies. He was one of Mr. Butter's famous kennel, dispersed when that gentleman found, for the third time, that he preferred elephant-hunting in Abyssinia to field trials and shooting



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GLOOMY FOREBODINGS.

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grouse around Pitlochry, where his estates lie. Bragg was one of the ten left in for further trial in the Puppy Stakes; but he happened to be drawn against Compton Bounce, the little setter that is so pleasing to everybody but a direct competitor. That was probably the accident that kept the All-aged second prize dog from figuring successfully in the money for the puppies.

Mr. G. W. Lascelles has stuck to the chances of Dora of Lyndhurst for several seasons. Many times she has been unlucky to be beaten, and often it has puzzled judges whether she or another should get the award. She, too, ran unplaced in the equivalent stake last year, and she was clean outworked, probably for not going at her best when Captain Lonsdale's Ightfield Duke never gave her a chance. Now, however, she has come out top, and everyone who knows her owner, and his perseverance, will be glad that both are at last rewarded. Dora is a fast, dashing, yet careful setter, on the small side, and generally she does better in fields than in heather of much length. At Inveresbie this crop is well burned, and there are plenty of grouse, and these two facts no doubt had a good deal of influence on the results; at any rate, she won the principal

event of the meeting, and the biggest All-aged Stake that has been contested for many years. Turrill, who worked Colonel Cotes's dogs so successfully, and Abbott, who handled Mr. Sawtell's winners, divided the breaker's prize. The former has been preparing his dogs at Auchleeks, in Perthshire, and the latter on Mr. Murgatroyd's moors in Yorkshire, where he had good trial horses to run against in the hands of Hallam, another clever breaker, who scored his year's successes in the spring.

UNCLE PHIL.

By M. E. FRANCIS.

"AND so now you have become quite a literary character?" said Miss Philomena, archly.

George Bickersteth set down his cup with precaution on the spindle-legged table by his side, and turned round very carefully to address the speaker. He was conscious of being much too big for the little room; his voice sounded painfully loud by contrast to the thin pipe of his hostess; his boots took up too much space on the threadbare carpet. He felt altogether unpardonably large—aggressively masculine.

Almond Tree Cottage, which had seemed to him of quite respectable dimensions when, as a little boy, he used to spend his holidays with his elderly maiden cousins—at that time Miss Charlotte had been alive—appeared now to have unaccountably dwindled; he had never realised, or so it seemed, how low were the ceilings, how narrow the passages, how frail the antiquated furniture—above all, how small and fragile was the presiding genius. He felt as an elephant might feel who had accidentally penetrated into an aviary. Indeed, there was something bird-like about the old lady's appearance; her bright eyes, aquiline features, and quick movements carried out the simile. Miss Philomena Peterson had a trick of pouncing with a side-long look upon anyone whom she considered in fault, in a manner which suggested a robin's dart at an unwary worm.

She pounced on George now.

"You have not answered my question."

The young man had indeed been revolving his new-found theory in amused silence.

"Well, Cousin Philomena, I suppose I may say that I am pretty well launched on my career as an author."

"It is so nice," said Miss Philomena, with a little chuckle,

"so nice to think that you will actually do some of your work here. When I heard you had had something of a breakdown, and wanted rest and quiet, I said to myself: 'This will be the very place for dear George. I am sure he can work here without the least fear of being disturbed.' And so I wrote, didn't I?"

George having acquiesced with a grateful murmur, Miss Philomena continued:

"All our neighbours are so much excited. We are quite a little literary coterie here, you know."

"We?" said George, interrogatively.

Miss Philomena blushed and looked mysterious; then she said diffidently: "Yes, indeed; a number of us write. Mr. Hamworth—the new rector, you know—he is always writing to the papers on questions of ritual; and Miss Tomlinson, old Doctor Tomlinson's daughter—"

"I remember Doctor Tomlinson," put in George. "He attended me when I had measles."

"Well," resumed Miss Philomena, triumphantly, "she writes for *Kennels and Catteries*. She writes about cats—you can't think what a clever, interesting person she is!"

"And you, Cousin Philomena?" said George, as the little woman again stopped, in evidently not unpleasing confusion. "I wonder what you write about—pigeons?—canary-birds?"

Miss Philomena chuckled.

"I have written about pigeons, George, but not in the way you think. I don't write anything of a sporting kind. At least—I mean—well, I suppose it is about sport sometimes."

"Cousin Philomena, you take my breath away!" exclaimed George.

Miss Philomena rubbed her little mittened hands and giggled delightedly. Then she took off her spectacles, polished

them, put them on again, and repeated, as she gazed through them at George: "It is about sport sometimes."

"Don't tantalise me," said Bickersteth, beseechingly.

"Well, I will tell you; it isn't fair to keep you so long in suspense. George"—bending forward mysteriously—"have you ever heard of a publication called *Pals*? It is intended, I believe, chiefly for boys," she added, her face falling a little as she noticed his blank look.

"Of course! of course!" cried the young man, hastily. "I had forgotten for the moment, having left off being a boy, you see. But of course I know it—an excellent paper, on view everywhere."

"In that paper," said Miss Philomena, making an effort to eliminate from her features all indications of unseemly triumph, but with a ring of irrepressible exultation in her voice, "in that paper are certain articles, signed 'Uncle Phil.' I am Uncle Phil."

"You Uncle Phil!" exclaimed George, with an appearance of stupefaction most gratifying to the little old lady's feelings. "In the name of fortune, Cousin Philomena, how do you come to contribute to a boys' paper?"

Miss Philomena edged her chair round the spindle-legged table right on to the worsted-work hearthrug. Her eyes shone through her spectacles; she was enjoying herself amazingly.

"I thought you'd be surprised," she said. "I must tell you, however, that I began by writing for my own sex. Miss Tomlinson, who writes the cat column in *Feminine Follies*, got me an introduction to that paper, and I undertook the correspondence. But somehow I couldn't get on with it; they asked such questions, my dear George—such strange questions!"

"As, for instance?" queried George, drawing up his chair a little more and clasping his knees. He was enjoying himself almost as much as Philomena.

"Well, about etiquette, and could I recommend an innocuous rouge, and how to destroy superfluous hairs; and—and one creature—"

She broke off, shaking her head.

"Do tell me!" said George. "This is really most exciting. What could she have wanted?"

"I hardly like to say," returned Miss Philomena. "It was a—a pattern—for—a garment. I don't think I could explain more fully, but it was a revelation to me to hear that ladies ever wore such things."

"Knickerbockers, I presume?" he suggested with brutal frankness.

"Really, George! As a matter of fact, she called it a divided skirt. I expressed my mind very strongly in my answer, and the editor—"

"I understand," commented George, as she again paused. "Well, and then?"

"Then I obtained an appointment on the staff of *Girlhood*. Did you ever hear of *Girlhood*?"

He shook his head.

"It is not at all such a well-known paper even in its own way as *Pals*," said Miss Philomena, with a palpable effort to speak without bitterness. "I had to write a weekly letter on subjects supposed to be interesting to girls. Well, George, leaning forward and speaking impressively, "I felt it a matter of conscience to impress on my young readers the necessity of being, above all things, feminine. I tried to discourage hockey playing, and bicycle riding, and all such unmaidenly pursuits, which are, alas! gaining ground so rapidly these times."

"And your young readers did not quite appreciate it, I suppose?" said her cousin, with a regretful air.

"No, I am sorry to say they did not. I was told to be brighter and more up-to-date—I believe that was the expression used—and they wanted something about the fashions. Unfortunately, in this quiet place I haven't much opportunity of judging about the fashions. It wasn't really a good publication, you know, George."

"Not like *Pals*, certainly," said he, bringing out the sentiment as though it were quite original. "How did you come to think of writing for *Pals*?"

"Well, you see," responded Miss Philomena, complacently, "I was always fond of boys. I have had a great deal to do with boys all my life. First my dear brother's sons, and then you. I felt that I understood boy nature thoroughly."

George nodded mendaciously, recalling as he did so certain episodes which had in the past caused him to be of a different opinion. Days when his life had been made burdensome by reiterated injunctions not to walk upon the grass, not to throw stones, not to climb trees—one memorable occasion when, owing to his having stoutly maintained that his stockings were not in the least damp, after, as it had transpired, he had passed a considerable portion of the morning in wading in the brook, he had been subjected to a severe lecture in which the words "truth" and "honour" had figured with crushing effect. There had even been a special clause introduced into his devotions that night which referred to this serious lapse.

"I have been on the staff of *Pals* for some time," she went on. "I fill a very important post—I edit, in fact, the 'Little Pals' Corner' entirely, and once, when the editor was ill, I managed the whole paper for a fortnight."

"And covered yourself with glory, no doubt," exclaimed her cousin.

The old lady's face clouded over for a moment.

"Well, not entirely. I made one rather foolish mistake. You see, I had been studying the back numbers very carefully, and Mr. Swanley, our curate, who has a taste for manly sports, and helps me a good deal with my 'Little Pals' Corner,' very kindly gave me a few hints—*wrinkles*, he said in his funny way. Perhaps you know, George, the sort of—of abbreviations that are now in fashion in alluding to some games. 'Footer,' you know, instead of Football, and 'Rugger' for Rugby Football, and 'Socker' for—"

"Yes, I know all about it," interrupted George.

"Well, I mixed things up in some way. I had to make a remark about Cricket, and I said *Crickier*. It seems they don't say *Crickier*. It was a very natural mistake, I think," she added, in a somewhat hurt tone, on perceiving that Bickersteth was shaking with laughter.

"Cousin Philomena," he cried—"no, that sounds too prim—I like your other name better. Uncle Phil! It suits you down to the ground. Uncle Phil, you are a perfect darling! *Crickier*, was it? I positively must hug you."

He proceeded to do so, still laughing immoderately, and Miss Philomena submitted with a certain gratification, though she was puzzled, and perhaps still a trifle wounded.

"I don't think it at all extraordinary that I should have been a little confused," she remarked, straightening her cap with a dignified air.

"Not at all. Do go on, Uncle Phil. Did the new word attract much notice?"

"My dear, the editor was pestered with letters about it. There was quite an absurd fuss. He wrote very kindly, however, to me, and said he thought he was now well enough to resume the reins of government. He could quite understand my being perplexed, he said. The slang current at the present day was no doubt quite different from that in vogue when I was a lad."

George with difficulty controlled a fresh outburst, but looked interrogative.

"I must tell you, my dear cousin," explained Miss Philomena, "the editor of *Pals* imagines me to be an elderly gentleman. Several little things have made this clear to me. I had no intention of creating a false impression to begin with. No, indeed!" she went on, eagerly. "You see, I always signed myself 'P. Peterson'—never giving my name in full. I suppose it did not occur to the editor that a lady could want to contribute to a boys' paper, and my writing is always considered very like my late dear father's, and so— I thought at first I ought to undeceive him; I had very great misgivings, I assure you—great searchings of heart. But I consulted the rector, and he said I had better not. As long as the writing was satisfactory, the sex of the writer did not matter, and possibly, if they knew I was a lady, they might cancel the engagement. You see, it is a very important matter for me, dear George, that I should have this employment; it brings grist to the mill. Since poor Charlotte's death—she had a little annuity, you know, left her by her godmother, but it went back to the family. Well, since then, I have been really rather straitened; but this makes all the difference."

"Well, I must congratulate you," said George, stretching out his hand and shaking hers heartily. "I am delighted to recognise in you a fellow quill-driver. It makes a fresh bond between us."

"Thank you so much, dear George. I knew you would be interested. I have been looking forward to telling you about my little efforts. And I also want to consult you about something else—something much more important. You did not know, perhaps, that my dear Charlotte was literary, too?"

George dimly remembered certain poetical effusions of the late Miss Peterson's, which were generally handed about from one member of the family to another in a rolled-up condition and tied with a ribbon. He now mentioned this circumstance. Miss Philomena, however, waved her hand somewhat scornfully.

"Poetry is all very well as a relaxation," she said. "But the great work of my sister Charlotte's life was something very different. It is a romance—an historical romance."

"Indeed?" said the young man, with a certain sinking of the heart.

"It occupied dear Charlotte during several years," pursued the bereaved sister. "It cost her an infinity of labour; her researches were something—"

Words failed her, and she cast up her eyes to heaven with a gentle shake of the head.

"Wonderful, truly," commented Bickersteth, in a somewhat depressed tone. "And did you collaborate, Uncle Phil?"

"I can hardly say that I collaborated. I helped a little—"

just a little—with the minor details, and I copied out the entire work. It was lucky I did so," she added, impressively, "for, do you know, one day my dear Charlotte, who was suffering at that time from low spirits, destroyed her own manuscript. The book would have been lost to the world if I had not taken the precaution to copy it in secret."

"Lost to the world! It has been published, then?" cried George, with dawning hope.

"No, cousin, not yet," returned Miss Philomena. "It's on this very subject I want your advice. But first you must become acquainted with it. I thought I might read it to you, and then you must give me your candid opinion of its merits. We have just two hours till dinner-time," she went on, her voice insensibly altering its subdued key to one of delighted anticipation. "We have quite two hours before dinner; we might begin now."

"By all means," returned George, with simulated alacrity; he could not for the life of him damp the little lady's enthusiasm. After all, even listening for two hours to an unpublished historical novel could not kill him.

"I have got the manuscript here," said Miss Philomena, eagerly. She crossed the room, and returned, carrying a large—a very large—square volume with a cover of purple plush.

"We called it a Saga," she remarked, as she resumed her seat.

"A Saga!" echoed her cousin, in amazement.

"We were always so much interested in the Danes," explained Miss Philomena. "Charlotte thought we had very likely Danish blood in our veins—Peter-son, you know; it may have been Peter-sen at one time."

George nodded gravely, and enquired the name of the romance.

"It is called," said Miss Philomena, "'Olaf the Dane: A Saga of the North.' Is it not a splendid title, dear George?"

"Very—very good indeed," said he. "The first part, certainly. Do you think the sub-title quite necessary—Sagas always were of the North, weren't they?"

"That's just it," responded Uncle Phil, excitedly; "we wanted to make it as complete as possible, don't you see?"

"Oh, to be sure," responded Bickersteth, and composed himself to listen.

The Saga was written for the most part in Shakespearean English, with occasional reminiscences of Froissart, Chaucer, and even Scott. Longfellow had also been laid under contribution, as George recognised, having indeed supplied names to most of the characters. The hero invoked Odin, and swore by the hammer of the great god Thor.

"I hope this doesn't shock you," said Miss Philomena, raising her eyes from the manuscript. "He becomes a Christian in the end, you know."

George said he was very glad to hear that, and the reading continued.

Olaf, who was the most noble and chivalrous being, was, it seemed, betrothed to a lovely Saxon maiden called Brythwynda. At this juncture the listener threw Miss Philomena into quite a flutter by remarking that the name had a British rather than a Saxon sound, which it seemed was quite the wrong thing, as it was necessary to the development of the plot that Brythwynda should be unmistakably Saxon. The difficulty was at last obviated by George's suggestion that the young lady might have numbered some ancient Britons among her ancestors, and the narrative was resumed. There were innumerable characters, innumerable adventures, battle-axes, galleys, iron gloves, all the paraphernalia necessary to the gallant Norseman; it was extraordinarily realistic, as Miss Philomena pointed out. George, in his comfortable chair opposite the glowing little fire, fell into a semi-somnolent state as the faint monotonous voice kept on, hearing the words, "North Sea," "Hamaval," "Dronheim," "Viking," as in a dream; the advent of Brythwynda roused a transient interest, but the personality of Olaf the Dane filled him with a sense of weariness almost amounting to nausea. When, indeed, that gallant hero removed his flashing blade from his fallen and hitherto unhurt adversary's breast, instead of running him through as a sensible Dane no doubt would have done, he made a sudden movement in his chair.

"I knew that would strike you," cried Uncle Phil, removing her spectacles and wiping them with tremulous fingers. "I always think it so beautiful. Dear Charlotte! she had such a lofty mind!"

As she went on in a voice quavering with emotion, George was genuinely touched—not indeed at poor Miss Charlotte's bombastic phrases, but at Uncle Phil's whole-hearted admiration. Dear little guileless Uncle Phil! He would tolerate Olaf the Dane himself for her sake.

But his patience was put to a severe test when, after dinner, Miss Philomena suggested going on with the reading; and, though this was continued all the evening, he observed with a sinking heart at bedtime that two-thirds of the volume remained to be disposed of.

"Perhaps after breakfast to-morrow," suggested Miss Philomena, looking up tentatively. She was extremely hoarse,

but quite indomitable. "No, I forgot; you will want to work after breakfast. We might, perhaps, get in an hour before?"

But "Olaf the Dane" before breakfast would be more than flesh and blood could endure. George said mildly but firmly that he did not think in his present condition of health he could get up so early.

"Forgive me!" murmured Miss Philomena, penitently. "It was inconsiderate of me. After all, you are here chiefly to recruit. I am afraid we shall have to put off the reading until the afternoon."

Bickersteth nodded, and mentally resolved to go out fishing after tea on the morrow.

"It does seem a pity," she pursued; "and we had got to such an interesting part."

"I shall be here for a week," George reminded her cheerfully. "Uncle Phil," he added, "as between man and man, now, would you mind very much if I have a smoke before I go to bed?"

The distressed look on Miss Philomena's face answered him before her stammering words.

"Never mind!" he cried gaily; "I quite understand. Carpet and curtains must be respected. What about the kitchen?"

"Betty," faltered Miss Philomena, "Betty might not like—she has been with me such a long time, my dear George. I should not like to seem wanting in consideration—"

"I'll have one little cigarette in the garden, then," said he good-humouredly. "The night is quite mild. I shan't be long, and I'll lock the house-door when I come in, so you can go to bed quite happily."

But Miss Philomena was not in bed when George came in; on the contrary, she was waiting for him in the hall, a bedroom candlestick in one hand and "Olaf the Dane," carefully covered in brown paper, in the other.

"I thought you might like to take this up with you," she remarked; "gentlemen sometimes read in bed, and we stopped at such an exciting place. I hope you don't think it too exciting, George?"

He shook his head, and said he certainly did not think it too exciting.

"It is very harrowing, though, isn't it?" she pursued. "Charlotte and I had qualms of conscience about it sometimes. Do you think there is too much tragedy?"

George replied that he thought, on the whole, people liked tragedy.

"Oh, but we didn't want to be sensational!" cried Miss Philomena, with a horrified accent on the word. "And that reminds me, George; something you said just now made me feel a little uncomfortable. You said 'between man and man,' you know. You don't think me really unfeminine?"

"My dear Uncle Phil," cried George, taking her by the shoulders and looking down into her anxious eyes, "I couldn't think you anything but what is most womanly and good and—
and delicious!"

And, with a little shake, he let her go; and Miss Philomena went up to bed a little fluttered, but pleased, and with a pink flush on her withered cheeks.

Next morning George came downstairs with such an evident consciousness of achievement gallantly performed that Miss Philomena, peering at him from round the old-fashioned tea-urn, at once exclaimed delightedly:

"You have been reading the Saga!"

"I have finished the Saga," he returned, triumphantly.

"Finished it!" gasped the old lady. "Impossible!"

"I read the last page before putting out my candle," said George.

"Oh, my dear George, how rash of you! What shall I do if you make yourself ill? I am sure that must have been very bad for you. Were you able to sleep after it?"

"Oh, yes," George said, he had slept quite nicely.

"Fancy your reading it all!" ejaculated his cousin. "Now, which part did you like best?"

"The end," said Bickersteth.

"I am so glad!" exclaimed the little lady, delightedly. "Do you know, I can never help weeping over the end? Did you—did you weep, dear George?"

"Ah, Uncle Phil, we men are hard of heart," said George, looking, it must be owned, slightly uncomfortable. He was somewhat in dread of the next query, not having considered it necessary to follow the noble-minded Olaf through quite all his vicissitudes.

"Well, now tell me," said Miss Philomena, setting down the teapot and speaking with tremulous eagerness, "tell me candidly what you think, dear George; give me your quite, quite candid opinion. What do you think of the book as a whole?"

George would have been hard-hearted indeed if he could have resisted the appealing gaze of those anxious eyes. He resolved to do the thing handsomely.

"I think it a marvellous achievement, my dear Uncle Phil."

The flash of exquisite delight in the old lady's eyes more



M. Emil Frechon.

WAITING FOR THE RETURN OF THE FISHING FLEET.

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than atoned for any qualms of conscience, and George continued unblushingly to pile on his eulogies, till Miss Philomena positively wept for joy.

"I cannot tell you how happy you have made me," she exclaimed at length, wiping her eyes. "You have strengthened me in a resolution which I have long been turning over in my mind. George, tell me honestly, do you think it would be safe to trust a publisher with a book of this kind?"

George, who had been about to outpour some fresh eulogistic adjectives, suddenly stemmed the torrent of his eloquence, and looked at his cousin with undisguised alarm.

"As a race," he said, after a moment's pause, "as a race publishers are certainly not to be trusted."

"But your publisher, for instance," cried Miss Philomena, after a pause of horror. "Your publisher, my dear cousin—you have done business with him for so long—surely you have found him an honourable man?"

George, who was, after all, not altogether devoid of conscientiousness, was constrained to admit that his publisher was quite a decent chap.

"Then do you think," faltered Miss Peterson, timidly, "do you think a letter of introduction—"

"No use at all," said George, firmly. "Believe me, my dear Uncle Phil, a letter of introduction does more harm than good. I think it annoys publishers to be supposed to be influenced by such things. Besides," he added, hastily, "this—this Saga wouldn't be at all in his style—not at all. I can assure you so, positively."

"And you don't know of any other really reliable man?" said poor Miss Philomena, wistfully. "It does seem so sad to think that the labour of my dear Charlotte's lifetime should, as it were, go down to the grave with her."

For a moment a wild idea crossed Bickersteth's mind of suggesting that the book should be printed for private circulation, and offering to sustain a certain portion of the expense; but he dismissed it as too fantastic.

"My dear Uncle Phil," he said, kindly, "after all, is not the work enshrined in your heart? Perhaps it would not have been Charlotte's wish that it should be published. She took no steps in that direction during her lifetime, did she?"

"No," said Miss Philomena, regretfully. "To tell you the truth, it is that which has hitherto deterred me; but, as I feel, now she may look on things in a different light. It may possibly not seem right to her, any more than it does to me, to keep her masterpiece back from the world. It might do so much good in this age of frivolous literature, George."

George looked reflective, but said that perhaps on the whole it might be better to abide by Charlotte's declared wish than to act on a hypothetical one; then, to end the discussion, he rose from the table, saying he had an important letter to write that morning.

Miss Philomena remained very pensive all day, and George sedulously avoided further allusions to "Olaf the Dane." That night, however, as he was returning from smoking his cigarette in the garden, Miss Philomena again waylaid him.

"Dear George, I felt I could not sleep without telling you of an important step which I took to-day."

George's eyes grew unconsciously round. "You have not," he said, hesitatingly—"it is not about the Saga, is it?"

"Yes, dear cousin," said Miss Philomena, with a latent note of triumph in her voice, despite its timidity. "I was afraid you would discourage me if I consulted you again, and I felt I wanted all my courage, so I, entirely on my own responsibility, you know—"

George could scarcely conceal a sigh of relief.

"I sent off dear Charlotte's manuscript by to-night's post to your publisher. I thought, as you said he was such an honourable man, I could not go far wrong. Of course, he will know I did it entirely on my own responsibility," she added, looking at him, wistfully. "I did not mention your name at all."

"But when did you send it?" cried the young man, moved by so odd a mixture of feelings that he scarcely knew whether to laugh or to groan. "How sly you have been!"

"Sly? Oh, not sly, George. I would not do anything deceitful for the world. But you had gone fishing, don't you see? and I felt, somehow, if I waited all my courage would ooze away; and Farmer Billington's milk-cart just happened to be passing, so I gave the man the parcel and asked him to post it. Oh, George, do you think it will be all right? Do you think your publisher will agree to print it? Oh, if he doesn't, I don't know what I shall do. It will seem as if I had humiliated dear Charlotte! You don't think he will say anything unkind about it? But, of course, how could he? You were so much impressed by it, and you are a very good judge, I am sure."

"I am quite sure he will not say anything unkind," said George, earnestly, and he mentally resolved to avert such a catastrophe.

He went upstairs, still a prey to many conflicting emotions, of which the dominating one gradually came to be an overwhelming compassion.

Poor little Uncle Phil, what would she say, what would she feel, when she received the answer to her communication? He could not bear to think of her coming disappointment, and resolved to lessen, if he could not altogether avoid it. Before he slept that night, he wrote an imploring appeal to his publisher, advising the arrival of "Olaf the Dane," and beseeching him to "let down" its sender gently. "Try to say something kind about it," he urged. "For Heaven's sake, give it a few words of praise—otherwise, I fear my poor old cousin will break her heart."

All the next day Miss Philomena remained in a flutter of excitement, which, on the succeeding one, developed into alarm.

"I have heard nothing from Mr. —," she said, when George joined her at the breakfast-table.

"They don't always write at once," said he.

By the end of the week a letter came from the publisher in question, addressed, not to Miss Philomena, but to George.

"I have been anxiously on the look-out for the manuscript in the purple plush wrapper," wrote this gentleman; "but so far it has not come to hand. Do not be alarmed; I will promise to roar you as gently as any sucking dove."

George looked up from the missive.

"I suppose you registered that manuscript?" he observed.

"I have heard from Mr. — this morning, and he tells me he has not yet received it."

Miss Philomena turned very pale and fell back in her chair.

"George," she cried, faintly, "what shall I do? Oh, my dear George! it was an unpardonable oversight, but I—I never once thought of registering it. If it has been lost in the post I shall die!"

"It is not in the least likely that it has been lost," her cousin told her, soothingly. "Do not be so anxious, dear Uncle Phil; no harm can possibly have befallen it. It is sure to be traced."

"Oh, but it may have been stolen!" cried Miss Philomena, with a great sob; "if it fell into the hands of a dishonest person, you know. Oh, George! it is dreadful to think of; but, oh! they might—they might alter the name"—her voice was now almost inarticulate—"and publish it under an assumed one, and no one would know it was dear Charlotte's at all. Oh, it is too dreadful to think of—it seems such desecration! Oh," cried the poor little old lady, wringing her hands, "to think I don't know where my dear Charlotte's work is now! Her life-work! I should never have let it out of my own hands. It was so sacred to me!"

George, finding all attempts at consolation in vain, started off to make enquiries at the post-office, but no one remembered any such packet as the one described having been posted on the day named. He telegraphed to London, but with no better result. The manuscript had not arrived at the publisher's, and could not be traced by the postal authorities.

Miss Philomena was positively ill with anxiety.

"I shall never get over this," she said to George. "Oh, I can't help it!" as he made some almost scandalised remonstrance. "It may seem wicked to repine at what was, I suppose, permitted by Providence, but I feel it will kill me. Every line—every word contained blessed associations for me. I think I must have been mad to let the precious work out of my sight. Oh, if I could only get it back—if I could only, only, only get it back—"

The rest of the sentence was lost in sobs.

George was at his wits' end, and, as a last resource, bethought him of going to find Farmer Billington's milkman, and, if possible, inducing that young fellow to accompany him to the post-office that he might identify the person, male or female, who had basely detained the late Miss Peterson's precious manuscript.

After considerable difficulty, the youth in question was extracted from a pigstye which he was in the act of cleaning out, but he could remember nothing at first as to the commission with which he had been entrusted.

The old lady yonder had often given him letters and such-like to post before, and he had always posted them right enough. If he had been told to post this one, then he had posted it for sure, and he didn't see why he was to be ballyragged and barged at.

"Listen, my lad," said George, impressively; "try and freshen up your memory a little. That parcel has been lost, and if you can find it I'll give you a sovereign."

No doubt a five-shilling-piece would have done just as well as a brightener of wits; be that as it may, the effect of George's gold piece was instantaneous and magical. The yokel's eyes sparkled; a look of intelligence came into his face; he shut his mouth—habitually open when not actually employed in eating or speaking—and reflected. Then he slapped his thigh jubilantly.

"I know where 'tis," he cried; "I know right enough. Boxer, he dropped a shoe just outside the village, and I called at the smithy. There was a two-three children larkin' about the cart and that—I shouldn't wonder but what one o' them had the parcel."

"You go and get it this minute," cried Bickersteth,

restraining a violent impulse to inflict personal chastisement. "Is that the way you look after valuable property? Bring it back at once, or you shall have a policeman and a dose of gaol instead of your pound."

The youth had darted off before George had finished speaking, and in a very short space of time returned, bearing the parcel intact. The smith's wife had rescued it from her offspring, and, not identifying the writing, had laid it on one side, intending to deliver it to the postman. A bad toothache, however, had, as the messenger explained, caused her to get a bit muddled in the head, with the result that her intention had not been carried out, and that the very existence of the packet had been forgotten.

Poorer by twenty shillings, but richer by an incalculable

amount of sympathetic delight, George bore the precious volume back to its owner. With what rapture did Miss Philomena receive it from his hands; with what trembling anxiety did she examine its every page; with what a thankful heart did she acknowledge that it had been restored to her absolutely unscathed!

"And, you know, dear George," she said, as she wrapped her treasure up once more with caressing fingers, in layer upon layer of tissue paper, "I can never make up my mind to part with this again. Yes, my decision is final, irrevocable. You must not think me changeable," she added. "I feel I could not go through such agony of mind a second time."

And thereupon George, nodding with a thoughtful look, said that perhaps, after all, she was right.

THE LATTER-DAY ANGLER.

THERE is one respect, and perhaps one only, in which, as anglers, we are better off than our fathers. Fish (we are speaking here of trout, not of the only inhabitant of the rivers that the Scotch gillie recognises as "fish," or, rather, as "fush") are not as numerous, as large, nor as simple-minded as they used to be, according to the unimpeachable evidence of Izaak Walton and others. Of some of these others, by the by, the evidence is not quite unimpeachable, for, as Mr. Halford has shown us in one of his very charming books, the measurements and the weights of fish were kept so very inexactly, that the one standard did not even tally at all reasonably with the other in some cases. But this piece of knowledge we have learnt, which really does give us a distinct advantage over our fathers—that success in fly-fishing does not depend nearly as much as they supposed it did on any conditions that we are at all able to appreciate of the weather. It is nearly certain that there are changes in the atmosphere, too subtle for us to notice, that have their effect on the movements, the appetites, and the habits of fish—it would be contrary to all experience to suppose that pure caprice is the cause, if that can be called a cause, of the fitful ways of fish that are so exasperating to the angler—and we know no better than our forefathers what these atmospheric changes are, nor the manner of their effect on the fish. We only can infer, with something like moral certainty, that such changes, insensibly to us, happen, and so affect the moods of the trout. But where we are better off than our ancestors is that we are far less under the tyranny of maxims about such changes and differences of weather as



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A FAVOURITE POOL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

we are able to see do have, and which they conceived to have, a very marked effect on the fish:

"When the wind is in the South,
The bait is in the fish's mouth.
When the wind is in the West,
Then the fishes bite the best.
When the wind is in the North,
Gentle angler, go not forth.
When the wind is in the East,
Then the fishes bite the least."

All these, and the like, such as the southerly wind and the cloudy sky proclaiming it a "fishing" no less than a "hunting morning," had so much effect on the counsels of the old-time angler, that very often they kept him at home if the maxims told him that the prospects were indifferent. The result was that now and again, no doubt, he lost a good day's sport by staying at home; but far more than that, whether we catch fish or fail to catch them under circumstances that would have kept our old-fashioned friend in his study, at all events we do not allow the maxims to rob us of those pleasures of hope in which all angling is so rich, and on which it depends so much for the delight it gives us. We go out in a cheerful spirit at times when the angler of the old school would have been in his armchair nursing a gloomy resentment against the weather.

Thus much have we to the good in respect of these anticipations of delight. We have increased the days of the year in which we can enjoy the chief pleasures of fishing, and



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A LONG CAST.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

incidentally have added to the general sum of good things that fishing gives us by adding to the numbers of the fish that we catch. We catch them in a stark east wind, when the Blue Dun or March Brown will hatch out in the weather's despite. There is still one class of weather that drives us to despair—the weather that gives us bright white hummocky clouds floating in an azure sky. Unless we can get an exceptionally shady bit of the river to fish over, we may almost as well be on our backs, and enjoy the queer intoxicating sensation of watching those white clouds sailing across the fathomless blue overhead, while the grasshoppers and things climb and jump about us, as go on flicking away at the stream, where all the artificial nature of our lure is thrown into most broad relief for the fish lying in the water below. But still, even in this case, under the over-shadowing boughs of that big tree we may chance on a good fish. It is the place for a good fish to lie, waiting for the fat things that fall from the foliage above him.

There is dark, broken water there, too, which makes the chance the better; possibly it is even a better chance on a bright day like this than it would be on one that most of us now think, and our forefathers certainly, without exception, would have thought, a deal more promising, for in this dark and mysterious gloom it is not easy to suppose even the keen sight of a fish perceiving so small a thing as the fly without a little extra illumination. But it is only in dim corners like this that success is to be hoped for on such a day, and on the open stretches of river all that we should effect by fishing would be to educate the trout to a higher degree of prudence for another day. There is another kind of weather,



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A LIKELY POOL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

at the opposite extreme, that is only a little less unpromising, and that is the weather that brings a low, clinging mist down upon the water. In this semi-obscure it happens now and again that trout are on the rise, but very rarely, and, as a rule, neither trout nor salmon are much worth the trouble of casting for under these conditions. It is not really that one minds the trouble of casting—the contrary, there is an artist's joy in the achievement of the perfect cast, whether it attract a fish or no, that makes it its own adequate reward—but the casting without hope is

a desperate and deadly business, not to be dwelt upon. In one other respect, at least, we are learning better wisdom: the *rapprochement* between France and England, as part result, part occasion of the mutual visits of their rulers, has its analogy in the *rapprochement* between the dry-fly fisher and the wet. A great many of us, and some who ought to know far better, got into the way of supposing a great gulf fixed between the two methods, a hard-and-fast division between those rivers in which the one mode and those in which the other could be practised with success. We are learning a little more common-sense than that. We know that there are stretches of the river that we have been wont to call a wet-fly stream on which the dry fly can be used with success, silent pools in which the big fish are rather apt to lie, and again we know that there are times and seasons when even in what is rightly and generally deemed a dry-fly river, a fly can be fished wet with greater advantage. All this, again, means an addition to our angling, for it means that both on the one river and the other we find more fishable water than we used to. Another fact that appears to begin to be more generally appreciated than of old, is that the trout, even of the rapid-running streams, has



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A BIG FISH IN A NASTY PLACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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"THERE'S MANY A SLIP."

"COUNTRY LIFE."

eyes, and that he can perceive the angler on the bank, unless the latter takes some reasonable precautions in the way of keeping low as he approaches a rising fish. It is a fact in natural history, this of the visual power of a fish, that is forced on the notice of the dry-fly fisher, for without a due regard to it he would not induce a fish "once in a blue moon" to take any favourable notice of his fly. The wet-fly fisher is not so emphatically instructed; he will catch a stray fish or two, even on the most careless "chuck and chance" methods, but he will do more if he does not endeavour to attract the trout by showing them the beauties of his figure.

A piece of relatively modern wisdom, relating rather to the management of rivers than of fish, results most directly in increasing the difficulties of the sport, while it tends, at the same time, to maintain the numbers of the trout. It is the wisdom of leaving uncut a fair proportion of the aquatic weeds. The trout themselves like, and must have, the shade and shelter of weeds, but their chief use is as a support of the insects and



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WHAT FLY IS HE TAKING?

"COUNTRY LIFE."

obstacles in a river like that shown in our pictures. It is a river on which both the accepted modes, the dry fly and the wet, may be used in their turn with success, giving a pleasant variety that, perhaps, is preferable to the day-long practice of either.



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A DIFFICULT BIT OF WATER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

molluscs that form a principal food of the fish. Thus, directly, do they benefit the trout population, and so, too, indirectly, the angler; but for the moment, when the fisherman has risen a good trout, and it is using all its strength and subtlety to get into the weed-bed, and so sever the slender line of invitation that the angler has sent, requesting its company at dinner, then the fisherman, in his haste, is apt to say terrible things about the weed-beds, only to be checked into a sweet reasonableness when he has the fish safely in the landing-net. Fish have an infallible instinct of the value to them, when hooked, of a weed-bed or a snag in the river. It is hard to believe that the purposeful fight that they make for such a place is no more than an instinctive rush for the well-known hiding-place; it would seem to have in it the deliberate intention of breaking the hold of the line. Possibly, by a slow process of survival, we are educating fish, on the hereditary plan that has so great a present vogue, to an instinct that such places make for their safety.

This is a subtle speculation—the angler, when he has his fish well hooked, has no time for such conjectures—but much subtlety of hand he will need to steer his fish clear of all such

THE NORFOLK BROADS.

IF the Norfolk Broads could receive all the ink which their admirers have used in describing their charms, it would be bad for the fish. In a literary catalogue, published some years ago, forty-two different works on "The Rivers and Broads of Norfolk" were enumerated, and more have since appeared; a new work on the subject cannot, therefore, be said to "supply a felt want," as the phrase goes. Rather is one inclined at first to exclaim, as in the case of a new addition to the eighty odd versions of White's "Selborne," that "Somebody has been at it again!"

But "The Norfolk Broads," by W. A. Dutt (Messrs. Methuen and Co.), commands a warmer welcome. Although Mr. Dutt's name appears alone upon the title-page, important chapters are contributed to the work by Messrs. Arthur Patterson, Rev. M. C. H. Bird, Claude Mcrley, H. E. Hurrell, Rev. G. H. Harris, F. W. Harmer, A. Townley



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BELOW THE BRIDGE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Clarkson, A. J. Rudd, and Nicholas Everitt, while part of another chapter belongs to Mr. James Hooper; and a very large part of the attractiveness of the work is due to the seventy odd coloured and uncoloured illustrations by Mr. Frank Southgate. Many of these are gems of colouring, though a little too vivid to be quite faithful representations of British scenery; but they have caught the spirit of the beauty of the Broadland as she appears to those who love her, and what lover ever complains of a flattering portrait of his mistress?

Perhaps to the cold critic the book as a whole may seem to contain too much of rhapsody concerning the loveliness of the Broad. People throng thither as they do to many other districts whose charms have still some of the aspects of virginity—for the Broad were only "discovered" by the last generation—but not all return enamoured. Regattas and picnics and lazy cruises over slow, sunlit waters are full of charm, but nights spent in fog-ridden marshes and winter days of driving wind, even with the tinkling music of ice falling in showers among the shivering withered reeds, are all very well, as the sailor said of the pudding which was made with blacking by mistake for treacle, "for them as likes it!"

That the charms of Broadland linger long is true. In spite of shortening days, October on Hickling or Oulton Broad is often more delightful even than July; but is it true that then, as Mr. Dutt says, "the banded dragon-flies twitter among the withering sedges"? An American paragraph in the newspapers, regarding the alleged importation of ladybirds into Britain, recently described how the passengers of the liner were kept awake at night by the singing of the ladybirds; and, if ladybirds sing, why should not dragon-flies twitter? Looseness of language is, however, not infrequent in "The Norfolk Broads." Mr. Dutt tells us, to take a casual instance, that in winter the wherries lie "fettered in manacles of ice," just as one might say that a man was shod in gloves of kid. But these are only trivial blemishes, and every chapter—almost every page—is full of picturesque touches which no one without intimate knowledge of the subject and a facile pen could use. Of October fogs, when "Nature puts a thicker veil over her fading face," and December frosts, when

"Down by the river a musical tinkling is heard—the tinkling of the ice-crystals on the reed-stems; every breath of breeze makes music, and the bearded titmice, as they take short flights above the reeds, utter at intervals their silvery, symphonic call-notes,"

there are true pen-photographs from Nature of the marsh and fen; and on whatever East Anglian topic Mr. Dutt writes, he writes well.

In the second half of the work, the manifest advantage of special chapters written by specialists has disadvantages also, for after Mr. Dutt's treatment of the various aspects of the Broads, it is inevitable that his collaborators, who deal separately with the wild life, bird life, entomology, pond life, botany, geology, archaeology, yacht-racing, fishing, wildfowling, and folk-lore of Broadland, should frequently repeat his and each other's statements. These chapters have varying values, too. While the Rev. M. C. H. Bird's essay on "Bird Life" is excellent from beginning to end—best of all, perhaps, in its description of the discovery of the nest of the Montagu harrier—the chapter on wild life on Breydon consists mainly of repetitions of facts sufficiently stated elsewhere in the volume. The "Entomology" is too scrappy for the entomologist and too "scientific" for the general reader; while in "Pond Life" the grammar is often muddy, as in the following:

"The Cyclops family has three special representatives, which include Cyclops quadricornis, Diaptomus castor, and Canthocamptus. This pretty little fellow gained his name from the formidable single eye occupying the central portion of its head, and as seen with its double egg-bag," etc.

Of the three special representatives which thus "include" themselves, the description of "this pretty little fellow" refers not, as one would suppose, to *Canthocamptus*, but to *Cyclops*, while the confusion between "his" and "its" only needed the reference to the egg-bag to make the reader wonder whether "her" would not have been the right pronoun after all. But allowances must be made for a writer who can tell us that a small creature's "glories, as a microscopic object, are far excellent"!

If another edition of "The Norfolk Broads" should be called for, it would be improved by careful editing as to such details. With this and its wealth of information, its beautiful illustrations, and its general literary charm, Mr. Dutt's handsome volume would deserve to be the last word on its subject for many years.

ENGLISH MEZZOTINTS: AN APPRECIATION.

ONE frequently hears the questions asked by those who have not studied the matter, is not the popularity of mezzotint engravings a passing craze, and will not the demand for them wane? The questions may be answered by an unhesitating no. Mezzotints are founded on a true art basis, and while storms may arise and beat against other styles of the graphic arts with more or less disastrous effect, mezzotints and etchings will abide the stress of adverse weather, and stand the test of time. The reason is not



By James MacArdell,

MARY DUCHESS OF ANCASTER.

After Thomas Hudson.



By Valentine Green,

After Sir J. Reynolds.

LADY JANE HALLIDAY.

far to seek; for in a mezzotint is to be found the essential qualities art is made of. True, as a rule, these engravings interpret the themes and designs of other artists, but the interpretations were, as a rule, made by men who were themselves artists, capable of infusing something of themselves into their work. Of course these men worked with mechanical tools and served a term of apprenticeship to the profession; but each craftsman was gifted with his own talents and had his own individual temperament to express, a temperament which, fortunately, could not be seriously warped or turned aside by the influence of the master-craftsman, even though the pupil served his master faithfully for the full term of seven years. David Lucas was apprenticed to Samuel William Reynolds for this period, as the indentures recently exhibited in Pall Mall testify; but the differences in style and treatment between the work of Lucas and that of Samuel William Reynolds are as wide apart as the poles.

Should the exhibition be still open when these lines are published, the reader is strongly advised to go to the gallery of portraits of Beautiful Women and Children in Old Bond Street; and it is hoped that he visited the recent show of David Lucas's landscapes in Pall Mall. No lover of mezzotints could afford to miss these two delightful exhibitions; and there has been the double advantage of the connoisseur receiving valuable information and of his aiding admirable charities.

In Bond Street the charm of the individuality of the mezzotinters will soon make itself evident—the tender touch of John Dean, the masterly exposition of conscious power of John Raphael Smith, the extremely expert technical dexterity of William Dickinson, the genius for rendering the sheen of satin of James M. Ardell, and the facility for catching the sentiment of Sir Thomas Lawrence possessed by Samuel Cousins. And the work of not one single mezzotinter in the whole gallery resembles that of David Lucas, whose power to enter into the moods of Constable's renderings of the caprices of Mother Nature, in his delightful landscapes, was so wonderfully set forth at the exhibition in Pall Mall.

One reason why English mezzotints were produced of such great excellence is traceable to the fact that the engravers and painters worked in close touch with one another. In the early

days of the art John Smith and John Simon worked in the studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller, and scraped nearly two hundred portraits after that illustrious painter; and coming to more modern times, one can scarcely think of David Lucas without a Constable landscape being brought prominently before the mind's eye. This close alliance cannot be more forcibly illustrated than by recalling an incident that occurred between James Ward, the mezzotinter, and John Hoppner, the painter. Hoppner painted a portrait of Lady Heathcote as "Hebe" that was one of his slightest. The sketch was passed on to James Ward to be mezzotinted, with the request that the painter might see the first progress proof as soon as it was ready. This proof—now preserved in the British Museum—was accordingly submitted to Hoppner for him to mark suggestions and alterations upon it, and such was the effect that the mezzotint had upon the painter, that Hoppner afterwards painted upon the canvas "to bring it to the print." Could anything bear more eloquent testimony to the value of the art of mezzotint engraving? It would almost seem that the English painters during the last three decades of the eighteenth century, while having their eyes fixed on canvas and brushes, directed their thoughts towards copper plates and scraping tools.

Under the dual support of painter and engraver, from about 1770 to 1810, English mezzotinting flourished to a degree never before attained, and that has rarely been reached since. And not only with mezzotinting has this co-operation of painter and engraver been of benefit. The same high result was reached by Rubens and by J. M. W. Turner when they interested themselves in line engraving. Rubens was not satisfied with the work of the engravers of his day, and so, for the translation of his own pictures to copper plates, he trained a band of line engravers who achieved distinct success. The same course was pursued by Turner, and hence the series of exceptionally fine line engravings after his pictures.

The popularity of mezzotint is therefore no passing craze or fashion, but an intelligent appreciation of real merit that will endure. The process was discovered on the Continent 260 years ago by a man of wide artistic knowledge. It was taught to a man of great attainment in the arts of war and peace, who carried the craft to England when monarchy was restored. And



By William Dickinson,

After Sir J. Reynolds.

DIANA, VISCOUNTESS CROSBIE.

a tradition claims that the greatest architect of the time turned his genius from designing a St. Paul's Cathedral to mezzotinting a Moor's head. And so on down the years of the history of the art, painters have forsaken their brushes and become mezzotinters, and in one case a mezzotinter—James Ward—laid down the rocker and scraper and devoted himself to painting. There are also instances not a few in which artists have practised the two *métiers* side by side.

The would-be collector who is waiting till the market declines and the rising tide of prices turns and commences to ebb before making his cabinet of English mezzotints, must have the patience of a Job and the years of a Methuselah ere he will achieve his purpose, and even then his obsequies will have been performed before the desire of his heart has been fulfilled.

Mezzotints are essentially English, and there is enough and to spare of Anglo-Saxon patriotism in this country and in

introduced into the background. A feature of the form of inscription McArdell used on his plates has hitherto escaped public notice. He made it a rule to notify his own share of the work with a small initial to the word *engraved*—"engraved by J. McArdell"—while he gave to the painter of the picture the greater prominence of a capital letter—"Painted by . . ." What modesty for himself! What a delicate compliment to the painter!

Valentine Green set himself the task of engraving a set of beauties after Sir Joshua Reynolds, "on the plan of those in the Royal Collection by Sir Peter Lely," and one of these is reproduced here in the portrait of Lady Jane Halliday. This magnificent plate was issued to subscribers on Christmas Eve, 1779, for the modest sum of twelve shillings; two years ago an impression sold for 450 guineas!

The work of William Dickinson displays perhaps the finest technical finish of any mezzotint engraver; and in the specimen which is seen here—a portrait of Diana, Viscountess Crosbie—his skill is seen at its best. The difficulty of scraping up to a delicate pattern of narrow lace, and leaving that lace in strong pure mezzotint, is here entirely overcome. Sir Charles Tennant is now the proud possessor of Reynolds's original painting.

In 1778 Dickinson entered into partnership with Thomas Watson—well known by his mezzotints of the "Beauties of Windsor"—at 158, New Bond Street, and from this address many beautiful plates were issued. We reproduce his rendering of the portrait of Lady Bampfylde, full of dignity and repose, and we can well understand that after a separation of many years from her husband, she forgot the past and came back to tend him after he had been shot at and wounded by a man named Morland in April, 1823.

Among the mezzotints by Joseph Grozer there are not many that can be placed at a very high level, but among the few is this portrait of the Hon. Frances Harris; and Grozer holds the enviable position of engraving this picture, which is said to have been the last Sir Joshua Reynolds painted.

Our space is exhausted, but enough has been said to make it evident that fine mezzotints must continue to hold the high position they have reached in public favour.

ALFRED WHITMAN.



By Joseph Grozer,

THE HON. FRANCES HARRIS.

After Sir J. Reynolds.

that of our cousins of the Stars and Stripes to guard and carefully preserve the fine mezzotints that have survived until the present day; and when any good specimens get astray and are found in the saleroom, there are always many anxious collectors waiting and eager to take the wanderers to a kind home.

After suffering depression and threatened extinction during the reigns of George I. and George II., the art of mezzotinting had new life infused into it, and was raised to a higher level than any to which it had ever before attained by that eminent Irish artist, James McArdell, who was born in Dublin in 1729. His brilliant plates were many, and few prints could be more engaging than his attractive portrait of the Duchess of Ancaster, taken from the painting by Thomas Hudson, the master of Reynolds, that is here reproduced. The Duchess is attired in a rich fancy costume—she was Mistress of the Robes to Queen Charlotte—and the sheen of the satin is expressed to perfection. Her toilet is complete, and she is ready for the ball which is to be held at Ranelagh Gardens, Chelsea, the Rotunda of which is ingeniously

Adriatic as background, you will see before you the chief source of Tintoretto's inspiration; bold masses of luminous shadow, alternating with streaks of golden sunlight; groups of figures in rich colours under porches or stairways of huge proportions, shadow taking a prominent place in the general disposition of the scene, and filling the eye with a mixed sense of coolness and warmth. In such surroundings it is not difficult to conceive the development of Tintoretto's genius. To-day we see the city peopled by tourists and shorn of its mediæval glories, and yet it is a city of natural splendours, of marble palaces, and glorious sunsets. What aspect it wore in the sixteenth century is not difficult to conceive.

In the Doge's Palace Tintoretto's four magnificent decorative panels repeat the glowing light and colour of the piazza below. He seems to have arrested that wonderful Venetian light, and to have added to it all the fulness and poetry of the Renaissance mind. Those paintings which Mr. Stoughton Holborn, in his contribution to the "Great Master Series" (Bell and Sons), seems to depreciate on account of their Pagan subjects, leave a strong impression of Robusti's genius than many of the enormous compositions from S. Rocco or the Doge's Palace. Some idea of the design and the drawing of the "Bacchus and Ariadne" may be gathered from the reproduction in

TINTORETTO.

IF you walk outside of Madrid upon the bare slopes of the Sierras you may see the reality which underlies the Equestrian Portraits. Sit low down on the ground, and you will have this same burnt foreground; should a figure pass, you will see the heavy blue of the distant hills low down behind its legs, while its head towers up into a cloudy sky." Thus R. A. M. Stevenson writes of Velasquez, and should you wander on to the piazza, or through the narrow streets of Venice, with that deep sky overhead and the indescribable blue of the



By Thomas Watson,

After Sir J. Reynolds.

CATHERINE LADY BAMPFYLDE.

this book, but it can give no notion of the richness of the colour, of the quality and ease of the painting, nor of the absolute fitness of the subjects for the spaces and building for which they were designed. Painting as decoration could do no more, and surely decoration is the first aim of the painter's art. With such an enormous output as Tintoretto's it is scarcely astonishing to find that some of his work is comparatively hurried, and is therefore of secondary value. Before the great picture in the Grand Council Chamber of the Doge's Palace, "Il Paradiso," we confess to have been quite unmoved. The canvas is so large that it cannot be seen from any rational distance, and it is not even well lighted. The small study for it in the Louvre is far more interesting as painting, and the composition can be better grasped and understood on the smaller scale. "The Paradise" is said to be the largest picture in the world. Many of the magnificent works in the Scuola di San Rocco are so badly lighted that they can scarcely be seen, and many are being ruined by restoration, but Mr. Stoughton Holborn very justly singles out "The Crucifixion" from this series as one of those "few pictures in the world that are beyond criticism and beyond praise, before which we can only stand and admire, and in the presence of which words fail us." Perhaps the "Adam and Eve," which was shown in a loan collection in London not many years back, is another work of this nature. Of the frescoes executed by Robusti on the façades of the palaces of Venice we can form no notion. The remains of one are still pointed out in a crumbling condition, but it is not even certain that this was actually Robusti's work.

There is a suggestive chapter in Mr. Holborn's book in which he draws a comparison between the art of Titian and Tintoretto. There is, he tells us, no evidence against the story told of Titian's dismissal of his pupil in fear of a rivalry which he could easily foresee. That the young Tintoretto, though deprived of personal instruction, was still influenced by so great a master, is, however, beyond dispute. But Titian's influence was not so important as has been supposed. Jacopo Robusti was a great innovator. He did not leave Venetian art where he found it. His genius was distinctly original, though it was based on the old traditions. "Il disegno di Michel Angelo e'l colorito di Titiano" were the words he wrote on his studio wall; this was the ideal he achieved, but he achieved that and something besides. Mr. Holborn also compares Titian's and Robusti's use of colour. He holds that Tintoretto knew the great secret of the art; he understood the value of restraint. Titian's system was more like the present methods used in stained-glass windows. The designers defeat their own object by using too much colour. Tintoretto's method, on the other hand, is like the old workers in stained glass. They knew the value of black and white, and of large neutral spaces, where the colour was frugally inserted so that it told, in consequence, with all the more purity and force. In this book we are confronted with yet another "father of Impressionism." Indeed, if the origin of impressionism could be attributed to any single individual, and not to a gradual growth and development throughout consecutive ages, perhaps Tintoretto's claim would be

as good as any. He certainly saw his compositions more in their relation to a general whole than any artists who had preceded him. He also studied the problem of how to treat paintings which were to be seen from a considerable distance. Executing pictures 50ft. high, he was naturally forced into examining such questions, with the result that he made certain discoveries in this direction. But what brings him into still closer relations with the modern impressionists is the wonderfully luminous quality of his painting. He was the first to use broken colour in order to obtain brilliance; but in his influence on Velasquez's art may be found even stronger claims to the temperament of an impressionist as we understand it to-day.

We have, so far, been dwelling mainly upon Tintoretto's technical powers, but these must not be allowed to overshadow the richness of his imagination. A great nature and a great soul makes itself felt in all his compositions. In a wide horizon of varied subjects, where every human passion is treated, we feel the culture and force of this typical Renaissance mind. In Tintoretto we must acknowledge one of the bulwarks of Italian art at its greatest period. Though his name and works may be less familiar than Leonardo's, than Raphael's, or Titian's, he is no less great, either as a painter or as a thinker. His works prove this to all who have the opportunity of studying them in Venice, the one place where they can be seen to advantage, in the midst of their native atmosphere and surroundings. E. S. S.

IN THE GARDEN.

SUMMER AND AUTUMN FLOWERING ROSES FOR PILLARS,
ARCHES, AND PERGOLAS.

ALL who plant Roses freely in their gardens must wish for pillars, arches, and pergolas of Roses in autumn, as well as in the early summer, and it is quite possible that in time we shall have autumn-flowering Ramblers in rich variety in August and September, as raisers are directing their attention to this happy end. Whilst, however, we wait patiently for these much-desired Roses, we have several varieties that may be depended upon to bloom in late summer and autumn, and it may be helpful to give their names.

Mme. Alfred Carrière.—A creamy white, large expanded flower, with bright green foliage. A fine variety, very sweet and free.

Gloire de Dijon.—Too well known to describe, but there is a great difference between the flowers on well-established and well-fed plants and those that are starved. This good old Rose blooms later than any, and is one of the first to begin. The flowers are much finer from pillars or arches than from those grown on walls.

Kaiserin Friedrich.—A good sport from the last-named, with pink-tinted flowers.

Mme. Berard.—This is splendid in the bud, which is of an apricot tint, suffused with salmon. The growth is very distinct, and the smooth wood of a reddish colour.

Rêve d'Or.—When well established a most useful Rose, giving an abundance of *Mme. Falcot*-like buds and beautiful foliage.

Climbing Cramoisi Supérieure.—A very vigorous form of the brilliant scarlet China Rose. This and the old *Crimson China* should be in every garden. The reddish foliage makes a good contrast to that of *Crimson Rambler* or *Aglaia*.

Aimée Vibert.—A pure white Rose, with clusters of flowers produced most freely during summer and autumn. One of our best climbers, not very rampant, but quickly covering a fair space in a year or two.

Celine Forestier.—A lovely primrose yellow, and quite an old favourite that all do not succeed with; but it is worth trying. The growth must not be pruned much, and try to encourage lateral shoots.

Perle des Neiges.—This will prove a distinct gain. The flower is pure white, about as large as *Crimson Rambler*, and apparently it is perpetual. It belongs to the *Polyantha* group.

Perpetual Thalia.—It would be a good plan to plant this interesting novelty with the original form, as we believe it will become a great favourite; the latter makes a beautiful pillar, and we should say the 'perpetual' form will develop in the same way.

Reine Olga de Wurtemberg.—This does not flower so freely in autumn as one could wish; but it will produce a fair number of blossoms. Its almost evergreen foliage should alone commend it.

Mme. Jules Siegfried is sure of a welcome when once seen. It is almost like a climbing form of that lovely decorative Rose *Enchantress*.

Pink Rover.—This is sweetly fragrant, with numbers of pretty pink buds; it is a fine pillar variety, and deserves extensive cultivation.

Francois Crousse, a fine climber, as brilliant as *General Jacqueminot*, with flowers of beautiful shape.

Reine Marie Henriette, a well-known Rose that succeeds almost anywhere. The colour is a pleasing cherry red.

Waltham Climbers No. 1 and No. 3 are two grand crimson climbers of distinct shades; the flowers of the No. 3 variety are very fragrant.

Dr. Rouges.—Coppery red, a most distinct shade of colour. It is one of our best climbers, but rather tender.

Cheshunt Hybrid.—This is a good hardy Rose, blooming as late as any variety we know, and producing excellent buds of a rosy red hue.

Climbing Caroline Testout.—A vigorous variety. The showy pink flowers look well over an arch in late summer and autumn.

Souvenir de Mme. Joseph Metral.—This has flowers sufficiently good for show, and the colour is cerise. It should be in every garden, and tried as a standard where no pillar space is available.

M. Desir.—One of the darkest reddish Roses we have for climbing; in fact, the flower has a purple shading quite distinct from any other variety; a most beautiful bud.

Noella Nabonnand.—A rampant semi-double Rose of gorgeous beauty, with flowers in the way of those of *Gloire de Margottin*, except that they have a purple shade.



Walmsley Bros

THE DRINKING POOL.

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RANDOM NOTES.

A Hedge of Roses.—We were charmed a few days ago with a hedge of Roses—at least, it was not exactly a hedge, but a very rough oak support, hidden with the flowers of the beautiful old Rose Mme. Plantier, mingling here and there with the crimson of Anna Alexieff. It was just the right association, and was the first time we have seen the two quite dissimilar varieties together. Mme. Plantier is a Rose for all gardens. It is exceptionally

free, and the white sweet-smelling flowers tumbled about in rare profusion. Mme. Plantier seems a Rose for all places. It makes an excellent standard, will run freely through the branches, and may be used in the way mentioned. Wherever it is there is fragrance and beauty.

Rose Mme. Alfred Carrière.—This has been so beautiful in many gardens this summer that we need not apologise for referring to it again. It is a Rose for those to grow who require flowers for cutting in early summer, as its long stalks may be gathered for free arrangement in water. It is classed as a Hybrid Noisette, has large pale leaves of the Tea Rose character, and large loose flowers of a low-toned warm white, capital to gather into a loose bunch in the hand and put straight in water without elaborate arrangement.

A Good Alpine Strawberry to Sow Now.—

A correspondent writes: "There is much difference in the size of the Alpine Strawberries, and though in the ordinary varieties mere size is at times objected to, this cannot hold good with the Alpines, as the larger fruits are more valuable. The Sutton large red is, in my opinion, one of the best of this small race of fruits, and not only is there increased size, but the quality is delicious. Like the small Alpine, the fruits are borne in long trusses, and if grown specially from seed for large supplies will give good dishes well into the autumn. Last year I saw good dishes of this variety the third week in October, from plants raised from seed in the spring of the previous year, but good dishes may be had in a shorter time. Seeds sown now in a cold frame will give good fruit next autumn. Much better results are obtained from seedlings, and by sowing in a frame better attention can be given to them, though for small quantities seed raised in pans or boxes and then transplanted will give a good return."

Campanula pusilla.—Few among the dwarfed Campanulas have greater charm than this pretty blue flower, which may be raised from seed, or little seedlings planted between the stones. It is wonderfully free, and the flowers are of the bluest. It is a plant for a wall or rock garden.

The Orange Lily.—No Lily is safer than this. We have just admired several groups of it in a large mixed border in Surrey, and in a town garden also, but both were equally fine. A well-known Lily grower writes of it as follows: "This is one of the oldest Lilies that we have, and it has shown its value in our climate, as many groups of it may often be seen in old-fashioned cottage gardens. The warm, reddish colouring of its flowers is most effective, and the Orange Lily will also succeed in most situations, so that as a garden form it stands in the front rank. When grown in quantity from seed a fair amount of individual variation exists, but not to so marked an extent as in

some other Lilies. The end of June and the early part of July is, as a rule, the time at which this Lily is at its best; but seasons and situations exercise, of course, a certain influence in this respect. It is a native of a considerable tract of country in Southern Europe, is sometimes met with as *L. aurantiacum*, and is very cheap. Though not particular in its cultural requirements, a well-drained loamy soil suits it best, and as clumps or masses in the foreground of shrubs it has a very pretty effect."

THE WRACK HARVEST.

THE island of Guernsey, which is more or less flat on its north, east, and west coasts, rises on the south side to a height of nearly 300ft., with a stretch of wild rock and beautiful bays which have made its scenery famous. This elevation of the land begins rather abruptly on the east with the rising ground on which the picturesque town of St. Peter Port is built, and it ends still more suddenly at its western limit with the fine headland of Pleimont Point. From the latter the coast trends westwards and to the north in flat bays dotted with innumerable rocks, richly coloured with yellow seaweed—the wrack, or *vreck* in the Norman French. Between Pleimont Point and the beautiful Cobo Bay farther west come the four bays where the wrack is chiefly gathered—Rocquaine, L'Erée, Perelle, and Vazon. All these bays have rude castles or more modern forts, which formerly served to protect the coast from foreign attack. The district, moreover, is not without antiquarian and legendary interest. Two of the smaller *dolmens* of the island are here, and are significantly called by the natives "fairy caves." They are in fairly good preservation,

though one is but a small part of its original size. Off L'Erée is the island of Lihou, which contains the ruins of a monastery. It is said to have been destroyed by a former governor in the fear of its affording shelter to the French. Rocquaine Bay has a sinister history in connection with witchcraft. Here the witches were said to hold their "Sabbaths," and indulge in unholy revels with their satanic patrons. During the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. seventy-eight persons were tried for witchcraft in Guernsey, of whom thirty-three were burnt or hanged. At the present day the "evil eye" and protective "charms" are said to be still believed in by some of the country people, and this small island has its full share of haunted houses.

Wrack-gathering, the subject of the accompanying prints, adds a picturesque interest to this beautiful coast. It is chiefly to be seen during the winter months and in spring tides, especially after rough weather, when the long "drift" seaweed is torn from the rocks by the waves and washed ashore. Then these quiet bays become a busy scene, dotted everywhere with blue-jerseyed countrymen and the square island carts drawn by



C. F. Grindrod.

WRACKING IN A SPRING TIDE.

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horses, donkeys, or, more rarely, bullocks. Here and there, too, men in long boots may be seen wading in the water and dragging in the drift with rakes of immense length. Heaps of the weed are gathered out of reach of the tide, and the carts are loaded high, a man standing on the top, as on a hay-cart, to receive and place the wrack, and then the latter is carried to the fields and spread on the land.

The wrack gathered in the winter is used as manure, and that collected in summer is dried for fuel. You see the latter piled in little stacks outside the cottages, very much as you see the peat in the Highlands of Scotland. Winter—that is, from autumn to spring—is the serious time for wracking. In summer, though certain times are legalised for cutting the weed, it is seldom that one sees the men and carts out at work. Hay-making, harvesting, or fishing are more paying labour, and absorb the energy of the people. The laws regulating the cutting of the wrack are as strict as those which govern game in England, and they date from a distant past. On January 16th, 1535, for instance, it was forbidden by the State to cut wrack from that date to Candlemas; and on January 26th, 1536, cutting the weed was forbidden before the first tide after Candlemas, except “in the parishes” of St. Martin’s, the Forest, and St. Andrews. The latter parish has no seaboard, and the two former have a coast unfitted for wrack-gathering.

Roughly, the regulations are as follows: Drift weed—wrack washed from the rocks and floating loose—may be gathered at any time between sunrise and sunset. In winter it is allowed to cut the weed during a week at each spring tide, *i.e.*, from the first

spring tide in February after Candlemas, and every spring tide till March 15th; which means about three cuttings. Another three days are allowed in September for cutting the thoroughly ripe weed which was not cut in the summer, and which would soon be washed off by the winter gales. In summer two spring tides of a week each in July and August are fixed by law; but men can cut weed from the rocks by means of boats, where horses and carts cannot go, all through the month of August. The limit is two cables length from where a horse could go. A month before the summer cutting—that is, two tides previous—poor people who have no horse or cart can cut wrack for their own use, but they must bring it ashore and carry it to the drying ground in sacks, or so forth, without the aid of horse or cart. They can cut enough for “a load of dry,” but no more.

Old customs are fast dying out, and an old custom has died here, but is still remembered by old inhabitants—namely, the “wrack feast.” Sixty years ago most of the wrack was carried by horses in light wooden boxes with bars across the frame, and slung, pannier-like, across the horse’s back. The bottom of the box was pulled out so as to let the wrack fall, when

a fresh load would be collected. It was customary for farmers to go cutting with all the hands they could muster during the first three days of the first spring tide in summer. When the tide was rising on the third day, and the cutting finished, what may be called in English “dipping the lasses” took place. The lads ran after the girls and dipped them in the sea, and then, after donning dry clothes, all went to a feast in the farmer’s house, after which fiddles, songs, and dancing. It was usual, also, to deck



C. F. Grindrod.

CARTING KELP IN WINTER.

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themselves with roses, and the horses as well.

Iodine was manufactured from the wrack in Guernsey until about ten years ago, and there was a factory in the small island of Lihou; but none is made now.

If any reader is weary of this plain account of a beautiful coast and a picturesque industry, let him turn over a dull page and listen to the legend-story of

RICHARD THE BRETON AND MARIE BECQUETTE.

In the reign of James I. many persons were accused of witchcraft in the little island of Guernsey, and not a few were found guilty and burned to death. The beautiful Bay of Rocquaine, with its white-towered castle half in the sea, and the great headland of Pleimont Point on its far side, was the favourite spot for the witches and devils to meet and practise their hideous rites. In more remote times, unknown to history, the neighbourhood had been associated with the "little people" and their "fairy caves," the so-called Druid altars, the *dolmens* of modern antiquaries. Now these had passed away, even beyond the whisper of legend, and their place was taken by the still more dreaded witches and their devilish colleagues.

Among many old or ugly women accused of this crime, no case excited more interest than that of Susanne Becquette and her eldest daughter, Jeanne. Besides the former being old, and both out of the common ugly, they lived, as far as possible, apart from their neighbours, and had the credit of morose tempers. It was not long before they were accused of witchcraft, and summoned before the Court. Numerous witnesses testified to threats of vengeance by the accused after slight disputes, and victims swore to the finding of devil charms in their beds, of sickness or disaster that followed, and of seeing the prisoners attend the witches' Sabbath at Rocquaine. The Court had no trouble in finding the two women guilty, and they were sentenced to be publicly whipped and then burned to death. A curious innovation was added. Instead of being burned in the common place of execution in the town, and at the usual hour, it was ordered that, as their crimes were beyond the common, so should be the place and time of their punishment. They were, therefore, to be burned at midnight on the beach of Rocquaine, the scene of their unholy rites, as a special warning to other evildoers, and even as a bold testimony that the laws of God



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CARTING KELP IN SUMMER.

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and man were not to be made vain by the machinations of devils. The story would have ended here, with only the foregoing variation to a common enough tragedy, but for the fact that Dame Becquette had another daughter, one as different in looks from the ugly Jeanne as was her character in the public esteem. If anyone called Marie Becquette a witch, it was only because she was more beautiful than ordinary women, for she had eyes as big and bright as we see the stars, wavy black hair, and a body as supple as the long wrack which floats in the clear pools and quivers with every touch of the rippling tide. Folk only spoke of her fair looks and kind deeds, and marvelled at the difference between her and her elder sister, hinting darkly that the latter must have devil's blood in her, the cursed heritage of former witches' Sabbaths. But though they were ugly, and reputed wicked, Marie loved her mother and sister, and, rather than be torn from them, she avowed herself also a witch, and was, therefore, condemned to share their punishment. No one believed her to be a witch, and no witness appeared against her, but the judges had to condemn her from her own mouth. It was in the first moment of wild wrath and indignation that she had done this, and perhaps, for that moment, she forgot her love for young Richard the Breton, her lover from across the sea, and the great grief it would be to him. Anyway, the word was spoken, and it would not be easy to take it back.

When soon afterwards Richard landed in his boat, and learned the news, he was too maddened with his trouble to try to mend it. The great joy and hope of his life seemed lost like a star in darkness, with no promise of future brightness. Yet in a while he forced himself to action. The very judges were sorry for Marie, and scarcely believed in her guilt, and with some trouble he gained leave to see her in her prison. When he entered her cell, Marie rushed into his arms, and sobbed out her pent-up grief more like a child than a witch, while Richard tried to comfort her with words of hope he had no faith in. Then at last he asked her why she had done this thing, why told this lie which was the ruin of her happiness and his? At this Marie



T. Kent.

A RISING GALE.

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roused to a little of her former spirit, and, half drawing from her lover's arms, she answered hotly, "Because it is a foul injustice, and I would rather die than live in such a world of cruel wrong! My mother and sister are no more witches than I am. It is only because they are ugly, and do not love to gossip like the others, that they are accused of crimes they never thought of."

Richard was not so sure of this, but he was quite sure that Marie was more angel than witch, and, pressing her to his heart again, he whispered: "But did you not once think of me, little one, and the joy that will be lost to us both—the great joy that was before us, which now you have doomed so soon to die?"

"Yes," replied Marie, sobbing afresh, "I thought of it afterwards, and I have thought of it ever since; but not at first, for I was too full of wrath for my mother and sister and their cruel wrong. I think of it now, Richard, every hour of these dark days. But it is too late now, as you say: our joy is doomed to darkness, and we can only hope that our love may begin some day in a brighter sleep."

Richard, however, had still some hope for this world, and, kissing away her tears, he said, eagerly, "Marie, all hope is not yet lost. The people swear you are innocent, and even the judges shrink from condemning you. If I can compass your escape, you will fly with me, will you not, dearest, and make my home happy across the seas? You cannot help your mother and sister by your death, and you make my life miserable. You will come with me, Marie, if I can find a door of escape, will you not?"

But the thought of her mother and sister dying their painful death once more roused in Marie the martyr spirit.

"No, Richard," she answered, "I cannot live in joy, and leave them to this awful death. I love you more than them—more than life or death—almost more than my soul's peace; but do not ask me to be a coward, to leave them to bear alone this cruel wrong! Now, kiss me, dearest, and bid me farewell, for you make me weak, and I shall yield if you stay longer."

Richard himself thought it wise to go, and he resolved not to plead further with her, but to make such plans for her succour as he could devise by himself, and unknown to her. Therefore, after a last embrace, and such words of comfort as he could utter, he left the prison, and set himself to think out some scheme for her deliverance.

It was a beautiful night—out of harmony with the cruel tragedy about to be played—that was to witness the burning of the three witches. The moon was half hidden by dark clouds, but made a shining path over the rippling waters of the bay, and only a slight wind was blowing across the black head of Pleimont. No time was lost in setting the grim drama in motion. Soon the three trembling women were led in front of the excited crowd, and the guards began to bind them to the stakes. Already the two elder prisoners had been firmly fastened, and the guards were less zealously turning towards Marie, when a curious thing happened. Suddenly a demoniac yell caused the guards to drop their cords, and what seemed to be a veritable company of devils rushed into the circle, quickly seizing Marie in their arms, and bearing her some way towards the sea, before

the scared officers of the law were conscious of what had occurred. The latter, however, when the supposed demons again rushed towards them, seemingly to carry off the other prisoners, had recovered courage enough to run between and prevent this further rescue, and the devils, after a vain effort, had to give up the attempt. Strangely enough, the guards made no effort to recover Marie, but seemed quite content to let the fiends carry her in triumph to a large boat which lay near the castle steps; and soon the sound of oars was heard, and presently, in the now clear moonlight, sails were seen hoisted, and a little later



T. Kent.

A SEA VIEW BY NIGHT.

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the boat was lost to view behind the great headland, never to seek shelter on that shore again.

The legend whispers that Marie had seen the vain effort to rescue her mother and sister, and then had lost consciousness, and so was mercifully spared the sight of horror which followed.

It whispers, also, that the softening hand of Time, her husband's great love, and the light laughter of children, which seldom suffers sorrow, and never a mother's, to brood long, were able to woo the gloom of that dark night from Marie's soul, and to make her grateful for the bold heart and strong hand which had truly plucked her from death like a brand from the fire.



THE name of Stoke Park, in Buckinghamshire, evokes many memories. There, in the old manor house, lived and died the famous Lord Chief Justice Coke; there, in great state, he entertained Queen Elizabeth; after him came other men of fame; and then the poet Gray invested the place with imperishable associations; and then again, in the old mansion, the descendants of the famous William Penn established themselves and afterwards built the house we depict. Stoke Poges has become a place of pilgrimage to all who love English literature, and to a great many who delight in the natural beauties of the glorious country thereabout. The place may be approached from Windsor through wide-spreading fields, and by wooded tracts full of "incense-breathing" pines, and by beautiful country roads, and, when we are arrived there, the majesty of the country is outspread before us, and the Royal castle on the hill, and the leafy shades of Windsor Forest, gratify the eye and appeal to the imagination.

The place derives its name from the marriage of the heiress in ancient times, one Amicia de Stoke, with Robert Poges, whose granddaughter married Sir John de Moleyns and carried the estate into that family. It descended later on to the house of Hastings, Earls of Huntingdon, who rebuilt the place in the time

of Queen Elizabeth, when, according to tradition, Sir Christopher Hatton lived there. "The grave Lord Keeper led the brawl" and, according to the fancy of Gray, "the seals and maces danced before him." The old house stands as a fragment and a memorial of former times, and is the structure in which Gray spent many happy hours. The estate was seized for a Crown debt after the Lord Keeper's time, and James I. gave it to Chief Justice Coke, who retired to Buckinghamshire, after originating and carrying the Petition of Right, and died in his house at Stoke in 1633. His daughter had married a brother of Buckingham, and through that alliance Coke had regained something of the Royal favour after his enemies had secured his downfall in 1616. Coke's daughter, however, does not appear in a very favourable light in the social annals of the time, and for her offences was subjected to a public penalty, but was rescued from prison by her lover, Sir Robert Howard.

The house was afterwards occupied by Lady Cobham, widow of Sir Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham, and it was during her occupancy that the place became associated with Gray. The poet's father, as is well known, was a violent man, who treated the boy's mother with great cruelty, thus shadowing and embittering Gray's later years. After the death of her husband,





A CLASSIC BRIDGE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

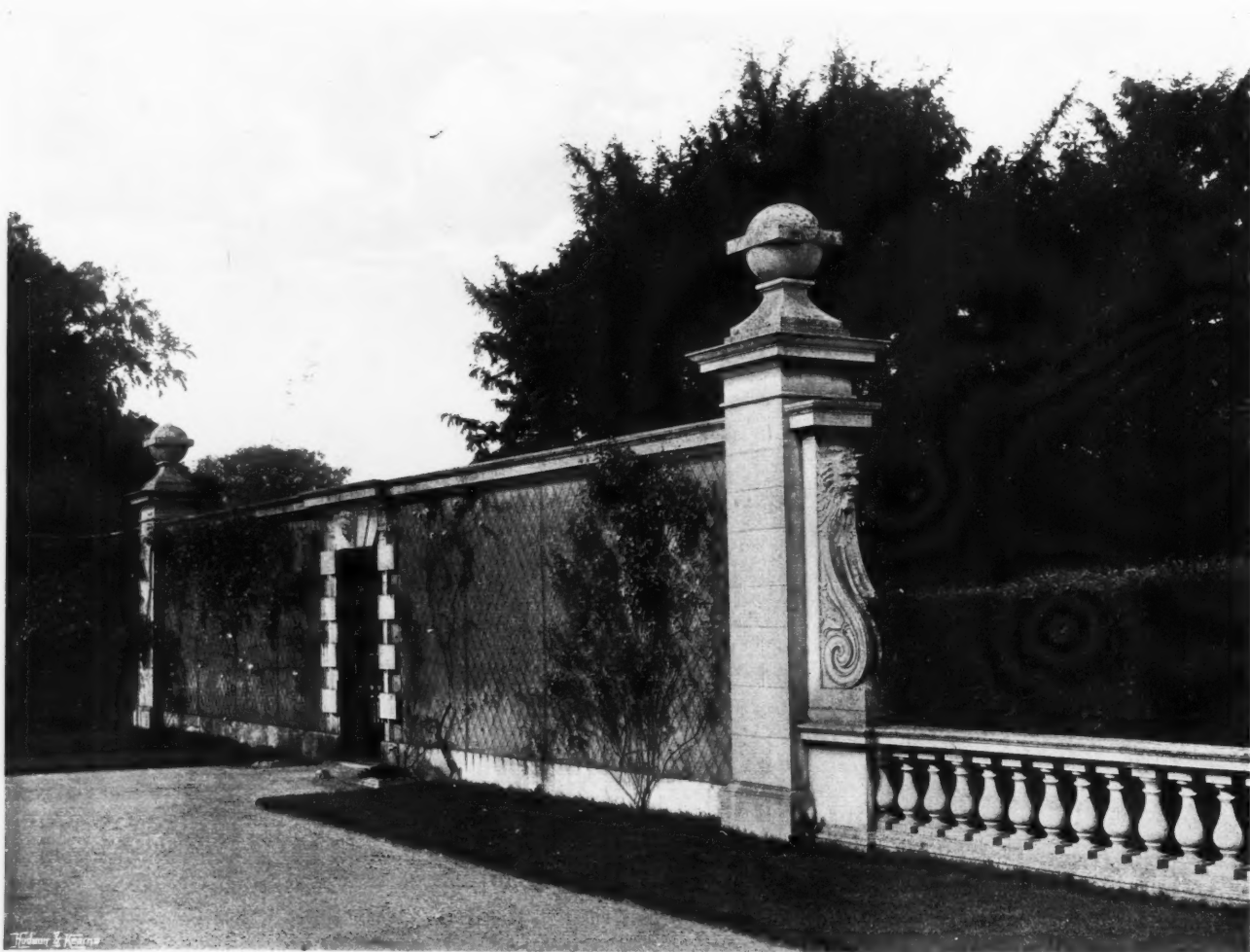
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FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

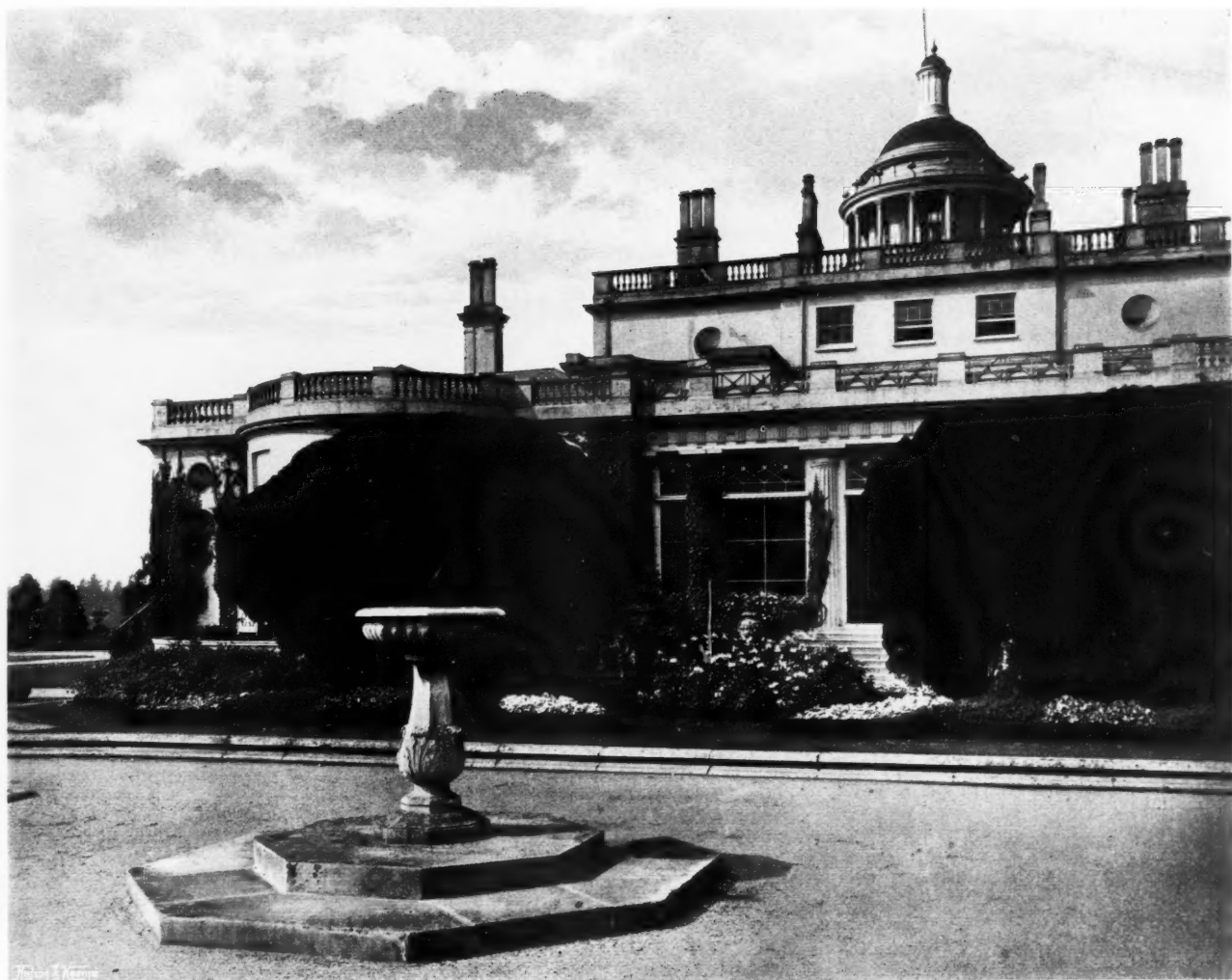
"COUNTRY LIFE."



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GARDEN ARCHITECTURE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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JUNIPERS ON THE EAST TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

in 1741. Mrs. Gray retired with her sister, Mary Antrobus, to live with another sister, Mrs. Rogers, at West End Cottage, Stoke Poges, and Gray was accustomed to spend the summer there. He described the house as "a compact box of red brick with sash windows." Several other places have claimed the honour of having inspired the poet to write the "Elegy," but there cannot be a doubt that his mind was directed to it in the old churchyard at Stoke Poges. All the allusions correspond with that place. There is the "ivy-mantled tower," there the "yew trees' shade," and there still are found all the rural charms which that "Elegy" uses so humanly.

"Oft did the harvest
to their sickle
yield,
Their furrow oft the
stubborn glebe
has broke;
How jocund did they
drive their team
afield!
How bow'd the
woods beneath
their sturdy
stroke!"

The "Elegy" was begun, apparently, in 1742, and seems to have been laid aside for several years. The author sent it from Stoke Poges to his friend Walpole,

with a letter dated June 12th, 1750. It was published by Dodsley in February, 1751, and passed through several editions, Gray always refusing to take pecuniary reward for his work. It appeared in the fourth volume of Dodsley's famous Collection, published in 1766. Walpole had greatly admired the poem, and had shown it to many friends, including Lady Cobham, who, with her niece, called to see Gray at his mother's house, and

left a note, which led to a pleasant acquaintance that brightened the melancholy poet's life. It was in relation to the old house at Stoke that he wrote his "Long Story" in his gayest manner.

The church stands on rising ground, just outside the park wall, with its Early English ivy-clad tower, and many interesting features, including memorials of Moleyns and Hastings, ancient possessors of the place. Near the east end in the churchyard is a plain tomb with the epitaph which Gray wrote to the memory of his aunt, Mary Antrobus, and his mother, "Dorothy Gray, the careful,



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PART OF THE CONSERVATORY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

tender mother of many children, of whom one alone had the misfortune to survive her." The poet himself is buried in the same vault, but the inscription is upon the sill of a window of the Hastings chapel.

The estate of Stoke Poges was purchased in 1760 by Thomas Penn, the second son of the founder of Pennsylvania, who, after a prolonged dispute as to his possessions in the colony, retired to England, died in his house at Stoke in 1775, and was buried in the church there. His son, John Penn, succeeded in possession, and, finding the old house much fallen into decay, he resolved to build a new mansion in the centre of the park, retaining one wing of its predecessor. He was a man of great taste and judgment, and a liberal patron of the arts. The house was designed by Nasmyth, but was completed by Wyatt. It is built principally of brick, covered with stucco, and consists of a large square block with four wings. The north, or entrance front, is 192ft. long, and is ornamented with an elegant colon-



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SOUTH GARDEN STAIRWAY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

nade of ten Doric columns, approached by a flight of steps leading to the great marble hall, which is a fine and imposing apartment in the best character of the classic style. The south front is of the same length, and has also a long colonnade of fluted Doric columns, forming a loggia, which commands a fine view over the garden. The whole of the south front, exclusive of the wings, forms the library, which is 140ft. long, and is divided into five parts by Scagliola columns. Above the bookcases Smirke was employed to paint various scenes, which were much admired.

The great park which surrounds the mansion is well wooded and much diversified. The mansion, standing upon a swelling knoll, affords a survey of great beauty, and looks out towards distant Windsor Castle. In the foreground is the fine ornamental water, supplied by two canals filled from a running brook, and winding round the east and south fronts. It is spanned by that most elegant and beautiful classic bridge which



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THE SALOON.

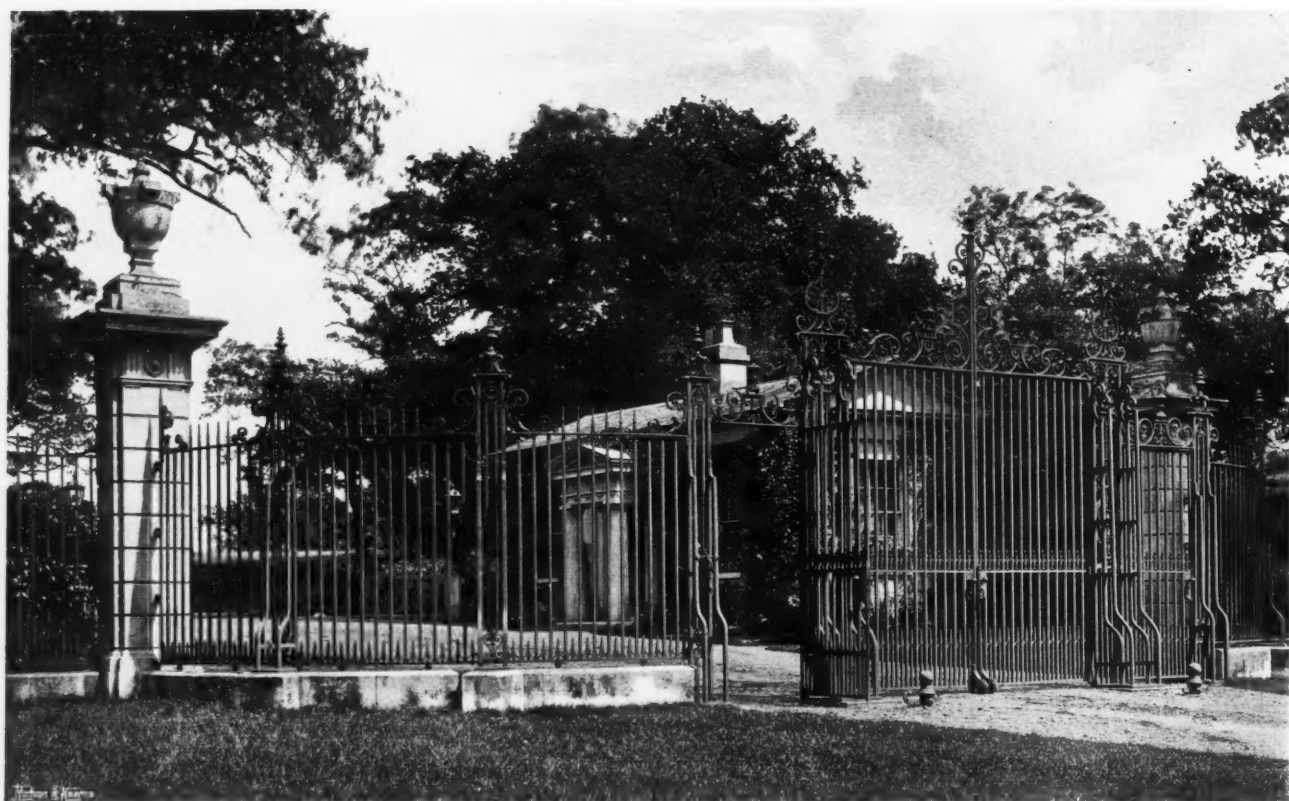
"COUNTRY LIFE."



THE SOUTH WALK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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ONE OF THE LODGES.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

we depict. Mr. Penn enlarged the park by taking in a part of a farm which he purchased from Lord Francis Osborne, as well as land belonging to the old vicarage house. The vicarage was pulled down, and a new one built in its place from designs by Wyatt, a liberal exchange of land being made. In this way the estate was improved, and it may be said, with truth, that nearly all its present character is due to the judicious care of Mr. John Penn a century ago.

Mr. Penn laid out the pleasure grounds himself, but it is said that originally Brown and Repton were engaged upon the work. The conservatory is a fine building, is adorned with a basso-relievo representing Caesar landing in England, from the chisel of John Deare, who was a skilful sculptor, and an intimate friend of Nollekens. J. T. Smith, in his life of that artist, says that it was the finest work that Deare executed. The sculptor wrote to his father in July, 1791, from Italy, saying that Mr. Penn had taken him to Naples in his own carriage to witness an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, and the antiquities in and about Naples. Deare added that he had work to the value of £470 in hand for Mr. Penn, probably all of which was used for the adornment of Stoke Park. As to the grounds themselves, Mr. Penn is said to have proceeded upon the principles laid down by Mason in his English garden. The result was a fine composition in the landscape style, or, as Mason says, an example of beauty resulting from a well-chosen variety of curves, in contradistinction to that of architecture, which arises from a judicious symmetry of right lines. Nature herself had never adopted the formal pattern, and therefore the new landscape school held that it should be avoided by those whose business it was to embellish Nature.

In the grounds at Stoke Park

there is, however, a little formality, corresponding with the structure, as in the arrangement of the south terrace, the walks and beds, with some sentinel-like yew trees, being disposed about the central basin. There are very fine examples of garden architecture also. The trees are of great magnificence, and are the result of much careful planting in experienced hands. One prominent object is a statue of Coke upon a lofty column. Nothing more, however, shall be said in description of Stoke Park, for the illustrations are enough to disclose its character and its merits to our readers.

FISHING WITH THE GHOSTS.

NIGHT-FISHING is to the angler what flight-shooting is to the wildfowler. In both the sport is invested with a sense of mystery and strangeness, and the setting and surroundings made shadowy and unsubstantial by the falling veil of twilight and ever-deepening gloom. Fancy and imagination are influenced by the unfamiliar hour and the voluntary surrender of most of the advantages which man has over Nature in the hours of light, that he may use one which he does not then enjoy—the power of invisibility, which makes wild animals, whether fowl or fish, indifferent to his presence. The reasons which take the angler to the river by night are to be found in the habits of trout. On many northern streams the daylight rise of the fish almost ceases by the beginning of June. In the morning they



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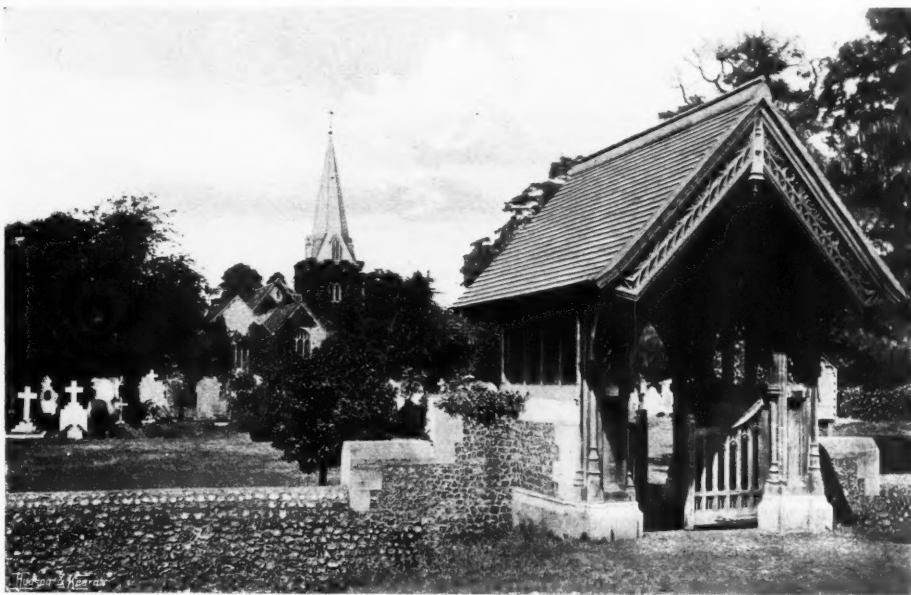
PART OF THE SOUTH FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

devote themselves to hunting for the larvæ of the larger flies, under and among the stones, or feed busily on red worms, without a thought of higher things, so long as the sun shines on the dancing ripples. But when the young moon rises and lights the setting sun to bed with her pale candle in the east, their thoughts turn to higher things. Little trout come into the shallows to dance and play, and big trout leave the pools and streams, and sally forth full of the fire of adventure, to fall upon the winged broods which the river hatches under the moonbeams. These night-flies and night-flying moths have their fixed hours, as have those which fly by day. Thus, among the latter, there are some which only fly in the twilight, coming forth as dusk begins, and going to bed with darkness. Before the dawn they fly once more, to vanish with the sun. The night-flies appear as the red fades out in the west, and then come forth in myriads, creeping over the fisherman's hands and his rod, and hovering close above the water, as is shown by the low flight of the bats, which sweep ceaselessly round the fisherman, and even strike his line.

Just as the sun has set the river banks are reached, where colour still glows, for night has not begun. Let me set down, so far as memory serves, the sights and sounds of the first night of summer, at the opening of June. The river, backed by a wall of crimson rock, and capped with a crest of elm and sycamore, swept gently onward, black beneath the cliffs, and reflecting on the nearer side the forms of trees and rocks, into a vast salmon pool, one level sheet of reflected opal light, except where a rising trout ringed it, or at intervals a salmon, heaving himself up into the air above, startled the stillness which comes over Nature before night by the sudden plunge of his ponderous play. Below the broad waters of the pool the river spills itself down a narrow broken channel, in curling, tumbling waves, flowing straight towards the rosy line which the day has left in the west, following the sun to the sunset sea. The night-flies were tied on, and a spare cast, with its lures in place, was set aside, for it is beyond ordinary mortal powers to unravel twisted casts by moonlight, and the night's fishing began. The place chosen was a length of dimpling, flattish water below the salmon pool outflow, fringing a more rapid and deeper stream on the further side, where other salmon lie. The season had scarcely begun, and the night rise was short, and it behoved to make the most of the time. Hardly had the first cast been made, across into the edge of the swift water, when splash!—a trout rose up above. Another splash, and a shine of a fin showed another fish rising below. The excitement of standing amidst almost invisible rises knee-deep in swirling water, with the roar of the stream above, and the grey lights flashing from the heaving river below, is great; the thrill when the line tightens with a tug, followed by a feeling as if it were fastened to a whalebone spring, is more enchanting still. But night-fishing must be deliberate. There is just enough light on the water to see the trout's head and shoulders as he is brought round exhausted out of the stream into slower water, and to put the net under him. To extract the hook quickly, and without entanglement, the thumb should be slipped into the trout's mouth and the fish instantly killed. It can then be picked out of the net, the hook extracted, and the line cleared; otherwise, with one hook in a writhing trout, and another caught in the landing-net, it may be many minutes before fishing can be begun again. That night the rise was fitful and short. A sharp pluck, then another pluck, saw the first fish firmly hooked and brought, without mishap, to the net. Then as we waded, with feet feeling for rocks and sunken holes, while dimly following the sweep of the line, the rush of a trout was felt, and a furious splashing, leap, and wriggle ended in the line coming back loose and fishless. Such a catastrophe takes the last remaining light out of the sky, and quenches the stars in blackness. You feel, or

peer upwards at the east. Are the flies all right? They are. Then cast again quickly, and the next rise will lighten the darkness. Above the salmon pool, under the cliffs, the river flows flat and slowly; and there, on a favourable night, the water is sometimes in a boil with rising fish. That night it was not, but the blackness was just broken by gentle rings of light. The trout were quietly sucking down some tiny insect, evidently too feeble and slow to cause them any exertion. Here was the place to throw a dry fly, though in the darkness, under



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STOKE POGES CHURCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the tree crested cliff, nothing could be seen of the form in which the cast presented it. A shy rise or two was heard, rather than seen, though there is always light when the water breaks, and then a good fish was on, splashing and tugging in the black water. Well hooked, he had no chance, and was drawn, with due circumspection, to the net. By this time the night was heavy, the mists coming down from the hill, and the fish ceased to rise. All the night birds were abroad, filling the air with clamour, their dissonant cries warning man that his dominion over them had ceased, and that they flew abroad regardless of him, or mocking his presence as their keen eyes marked him groping by the stream. Begone! Begone! they shriek, as their heavy



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THE CHURCHYARD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

wings flap overhead. The sand-pipers that have flitted so shyly and gracefully by day past his uplifted rod now settle on the shingle almost at his feet, and scream, shrill and insistent, that he shall linger no longer by their stream. Herons flap past invisible, with brazen throats, or pass high overhead, like harpies against the dusky sky. In the far distance, but nearer and nearer, some unknown bird of night, repeating at set intervals a loud and raucous cry, comes hurrying up, and passes over and away, till its ill-omened voice dies in the distance. Snoring owls

circle on silent wings in the gloom, while the curlews pipe and plovers cry. Squeaking like a bat, a woodcock flits past—you know his note, though he is invisible—and the hideous laughter of the black-backed gull shows that the sea contributes its winged brood to these hosts of darkness.

It begins to be lonely by the river. The nerves are overstrung. "This is no place for me," says the reasonable soul within. Mists and waters and darkness, and the obscene birds of night—these are the surroundings of the dead, not of the living.

"Now the wasted brands do glow,
While the screech-owl screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe,
In remembrance of a shroud;
Now it is the time of night
That the graves, all opening wide,
Every one lets forth its sprite,
Down the churchway paths to glide."

There is said to be a ghost on this reach of the stream, a woman who walks on the water. By Hecate, there she is! A tall grey figure, gliding up the river, outlined against the blackness of the cliff. It was all very well for Shelley to sit down in the daytime and pen his invitation:

"Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of night,
Out of thy misty eastern cave,
Swift be thy flight."

But had he met her, like this, alone by the river at that hour, what would have been his greeting? Judging from analogy, his hair would have tended to stand up, his flesh to creep, and he would have asked himself, "What am I to do? I must see who and what she is, though this is most irregular and out-of-date. Or shall I go straight home? No—I can't leave it there—I must go closer and see." The approach was nervous, and therefore swift, and apparently resolute. The figure became gigantic, yet it kept its form. Then it explained itself, as ghosts generally do. It was a whirling white pillar of mist, with a kind of body and head, moving up the river, and accounted for, as the learned afterwards explained, by the warm air travelling up the main stream encountering a cold vapour which comes down a tributary, which condenses the other, and the pillar of mist moves onward in the form which tradition gives it. Hardly had the ghost "dislimbed," when the blackness above was filled with groans and shrieks, not momentary, but continuing, as if some creature were being tormented, while over all came a loud, harsh mocking laugh. "Death from natural causes" is the verdict of every puzzled jury, but to tell the natural causes of this strange uproar in the sky was, for a time, beyond even a conjecture.

Dimly two birds, one a heron and another above it, were seen to cross the moon. It was a black-backed gull attacking the heron to make it disgorge its plunder of fish.

Judging by the sound, the heron made a long and arduous flight, uttering every note of woe and anger, as it tried to escape the midnight pirate from the sea. C. J. CORNISH.

THE BARN OWL.

A SPECIAL kind of mystery hangs about all birds that are chiefly associated with night. In the case of the nightingale it is the mystery of romance, and with the sea-birds it is that of superstition, for numberless are the traditions and legends founded upon the fact that wild geese flying high through the air at night-time produce noises not unlike those of a pack of hounds; and, as Canon Atkinson showed in one of his delightful books about Danby Dale, the belief that the fields of Heaven are hunted by spectral hounds used to be a common one in Yorkshire. But the owl has the distinction of being associated in our minds with ideas of wisdom, and the wisest of the goddesses in the Greek mythology is on this account represented with an owl. Under the stress of modern education, however, that idea has, to a



T. A. Metcalfe.

BARN OWL AND YOUNG.

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considerable extent, given way, and most of us love the owl chiefly because of its voice being a picturesque, if we may apply the word in that sense, feature of the night. This refers more particularly to the wood or brown owl. In places where this bird is numerous—and we could mention a great number of them—the peculiar and eerie hooting goes on all the night, and "everie night and alle." It is said that the bird gives a hoot of triumph whenever it secures a mouse, and in that case it would seem to devour a great number. Each owl appears to have its own particular beat, and well do I remember, when a boy, listening at night to the cries that told of the perambulations of my favourite owl. He hooted first in front of a little attic window, through which, on moonlight nights, one could see for many miles to where the hills lay ghostly and mysterious in the distance. After hooting here he flew to the stack-yard, and seemed always to spend a few minutes beating it; then for some time he followed the course of a slender river till he came to a field fenced in on three sides by strips of plantation. Faintly in the distance one could hear him uttering his cry at points in this field, and then he flew over the village and back again to the old elm by the window, often alighting on a dead branch and resting there. For years this owl used to follow the same beat night after night, or if he did not, then some other owl took his place, because the hooting was heard over and over again by many different ears. The birds used to nest in a rook's deserted home, and every season one at least of the fluffy offspring was brought up by hand at the house, though generally to meet with a tragic end. But very solemnly while they lived did they sit on what was meant



T. A. Metcalfe. YOUNG BARN OWLS ABOUT FOUR WEEKS OLD. Copyright



T. A. Metcalfe. BARN OWL SEVEN WEEKS OLD. Copyright

for a bookshelf in that high attic, and I remember once when a doctor was called in to attend to some trifling ailment he was somewhat surprised, for, "What a beautifully stuffed owl!" he said, and, putting on his spectacles, advanced his face and peered closely at it; but the creature, which was accustomed to being teased, fuffed like a cat, and made a dab at the old gentleman's nose, which made him draw back more hastily than he approached.

Needless to say, the owl of Mr. Metcalfe's illustrations is an altogether different species. It is the barn owl, or "screech owl," as country-folk call it, on account of its cry, and upon this point Mr. Metcalfe, when sending the photographs, made a very interesting note. He says, "Ever since I was a boy I have taken a great interest in this beautiful bird of the night, and many a time its weird scream has made my hair feel as if it was rising up. Its call-note, when travelling at night to its feeding ground, very much resembles the call-note of the water-hen, and I have known people say they had heard a water-hen call as it flew over them at night." Of course, they did not believe that water-hens were accustomed to travel in darkness, and the occurrence seemed to be a surprising one in natural history. Mr. Metcalfe tells how astonished they were when informed that it was the owl that shrieked, even as he did on that fateful night when "Glamis hath murdered sleep and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more." Mr. Metcalfe relates the following amusing anecdote of his bird-nesting days: "When I was a boy, father told me of a barn owl's nest in a hollow, broken branch high up in a large ash tree. I got one of the farm labourers to get up to the nest by the aid of a ladder, and had the pleasure of seeing the old bird fly from the hole. There were four eggs, quite fresh; they were rather smaller than those of the long-eared owl, and more pointed at the small end. They were unlike the eggs of the other owls, not polished, but rather dull and strong in shell. They could not well be mistaken for those of any of the others. The usual number of eggs is six, but, as the bird begins to age, the number is gradually reduced to five and four, and finally, when the bird becomes old, it ceases to lay at all, thus enjoying a period of repose before it departs to its 'happy hunting ground.'" Mr. Metcalfe gives it as his opinion that the young are very ugly until they are about a fortnight old, and his photographs amply bear out the statement. At about seven weeks they do not look so much all beak, but turn into beautiful little creatures, and have an unappeasable appetite for mice, which they swallow whole, head first, the hind legs and tail of the mouse disappearing with the last gasp, after a pause, as if the little glutton had stopped to enjoy the situation, and was loth to finish the delightful process of swallowing. He says further, "I do not think the barn owl feeds on anything but mice, as I have never found the remains of a bird among the pellets which it ejects, not even when there were young ones in the nest. The old bird tears the mouse in pieces to feed its young until they are three weeks old; after that they begin to swallow the little creature whole. I could never persuade a barn owl to feed on sparrows when they were kept in confinement, and suppose, therefore, they were not its natural food, and the sparrow is too large to swallow whole. I have

known one when hungry gulp down a half-grown sparrow, and young owls will eat them if cut up into small pieces. When a rat is given them, it should have its head cut off and be cleaned, as a rabbit is for human food. After this it should be split open and each half cut into slices. It will then be swallowed, bones, skin, and all; and, indeed, these are necessary for castings. I always gave them water, and it disappeared, so I cannot be far wrong in thinking that they drank it. Of all owls the barn owl is the safest to handle. It certainly will hiss at you, and make as if it would claw your hand; but if you are not afraid, it can be handled with impunity. I have often wondered when looking at the barn owl why it lowers its head, and shakes it slowly backwards and forwards in such a solemn manner. It is just as if it were rubbing its beard; but the young have the same habit. The male bird has a speckled breast, while that of the hen is pure white. She is not quite so handsome as her mate. The usual time of nesting is late in April, and the barn owl likes a hole in an old ruin or quarry. It builds, too, in a hole in a tree, sometimes close to a house where, if not disturbed, the old birds may be seen with the young birds near the nesting hole, carrying mice to their progeny."

It will, we think, be admitted that Mr. Metcalfe's observations are extremely interesting, and have that personal touch which comes from one who uses his own eyes. It may be added that there are several colonies of barn owls close to London, that is to say, within twelve or fourteen miles of the Bank of England, and we know of clutches of eggs that have been hatched out during the present year without mishap, though it would scarcely be prudent to indicate the whereabouts. At many farm-places the barn owl justifies its name by being kept in a barn, where it is as good as a cat for keeping the mice down. At least, this is true of olden times, but not so true of to-day. The farmer of fifty or sixty years ago made constant use of his granary. He was in the habit of letting his stack-yard remain full of ricks for the greater part of the year, and if he did any threshing he chose for the purpose a wet day on which no other work could be done. The consequence was that he had a considerable quantity of wheat stored during all the months of the year. The grain quite naturally attracted rats and mice, and it was by no means easy to keep them down in buildings that were too often dilapidated. He was thus glad to encourage such an excellent mouser as the owl, and the boys at the farmhouse found it a delightful occupation to rob a "Jenny Howlet" or two from a nest and to nurse the little birds and feed them till they learned to go hawking on their own account. The great tithe barn formed an excellent aviary for these half-tame, half-wild owls that learnt to sit all day in some convenient nook high up among the rafters, and at night on their soft wide wings floated about the barn and dropped on any unfortunate mouse or rat that had ventured from its hole to steal a share of the good man's corn. When left to themselves the owls were fond of nesting in the belfry tower of the old church, or in the crevices of some ancient ivy-grown castle, tempting the boys of the neighbourhood to risk their necks by climbing to get at the nests.



T. A. Metcalfe.

MALE BARN OWL.

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AFTER THE WILD RED DEER.

By SIR HENRY SETON KARR.

A DEER stalker's outfit is not of a very elaborate nature, but any little hitch at the critical moment may prove fatal. Very soon some of us may be "on the hill." Rifles will soon be looked to. The thoughtful sportsman is thinking of ordering ammunition. The stalking season of 1903 is, in fact, approaching, and the fortunate lessees of Highland forests are asking for reports from Donald and Alec and Sandy, and others of that ilk, as to the state of the forest grass, the condition of the deer, and the prospect of good heads. I say "fortunate lessees" advisedly, for red-deer stalking in the highly-anted and strictly-preserved forests of the Scottish Highlands is, in these latter days, sport only for the rich man and his friends, and is even competed for by a few Transatlantic sportsmen, who pay our little island in the North Sea the compliment of crossing 3,000 miles of ocean every year in order to take part in Highland sport, in preference to hunting big game on their own magnificent continent. There are a fair number of Scotch forests on our little island, all the same; 132 is the reckoned figure, comprising 2,000,000 acres of moorland, hill, and glen, on which in, say, a short eight weeks some 5,000 stags fall annually to the rifle. It may be a comfort to the economist to consider what a valuable supply of wholesome food is thus provided for many worthy people, as well as a satisfactory addition made to the rateable assessment of Highland properties, all from the amusement of some rich folks, and off land that in all probability would not if deforested provide the equivalent of the deer value in mutton and wool.

But this is somewhat of a digression from the main object of our theme. Scotch deer-forests will always command a high rent, because there are plenty of stags to stalk, and the sport of stalking them—with, maybe, an odd drive now and then—is, to a certain class of men, excellent value for the money paid. Modern civilisation has not yet eradicated from civilised man, and the writer hopes it never will, the natural hunting instincts inherited from Nimrod and Esau and others like them.

What is it that makes the heart thump when crawling in for

a shot at a wild Highland stag of ten? It is hard to say. The same animal feeding tamely in an English park arouses no such bloodthirsty desires, though he carries—pampered beast that he is—fatter haunches and a far finer head. "Buck fever" in the sportsman is a stern reality that at times has saved the life of many a noble monarch of the glen. One of the most painfully exciting hours I ever spent was years ago, during my first season on a Sutherlandshire forest. It was our first day on the hill, and neither Sandy, the head-stalker, nor myself had as yet acquired that modicum of confidence in the partnership and the rifle that was born of subsequent combined and successful



C. Reid.

A GOLDEN EAGLE.

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C. Reid.

A ROYAL STAG.

Copyright

achievement. We had spied a good stag lying down, and after many gymnastic exercises and a long crawl had reached a stone within 120 yds. of the deer. I could see his horns over a tuft of heather. "We must wait till he rises," was Sandy's command: and for an hour or more I lay in a bog-hole watching that pair of horns. I suggested whistling him up; but Sandy would have none of it. Was there no better way into him, and then chance a running shot? my youthful impatience urged. Sandy only frowned. I began to think we were there for the day. But fortune favoured us. We were lying on a side wind, and an inquisitive nobby, feeding into a hollow down wind, suddenly caught a whiff of tainted air. He trotted on to the flat 100 yds. away, and stood for a moment, plainly conveying to the couched stag, by some means of wireless telegraphy unknown to humanity, a sense of urgent impending danger. "Look out, sir," whispered Sandy. I also fancied I caught an unparliamentary epithet applied to the nobby. As I thrust the loaded rifle over the stone the stag sprang to his feet, but stood for a second too long. I had a fair sight of his breast as he faced me, and the next moment a fine eight-pointer lay dead on the heather, shot, as luck would have it, exactly in the right spot. Thus was the foundation of a lasting comradeship between Sandy and myself happily laid.

But how one sometimes dreads, in a way, to fire the shot. It is, perchance, a particularly fine beast in a particularly awkward spot. That last miss a few days back has, maybe, shaken our confidence. The rifleman has an attack of nerves, and is only too conscious that his hand may fail him, and pictures to himself the stalker's feelings after the event.

I was stalking some years ago in a famous Inverness-shire forest, as the guest of a kindly host. It was late in the season. There were plenty of deer, but they were restless, and the difficulty often was to get through hinds or past inferior stags to the warrantable beast one wanted. We had spied a very fair stag on a bare and open hillside near a parcel of hinds, and

with infinite trouble, after a long round, had crawled over a small flat halfway up the hill, and just out of sight of the deer, when Alec, the stalker, suddenly petrified, so to speak, in front of me. I glanced beyond him and down the hill.

There appeared a magnificent ten-pointer, obviously a far better animal than the stag we were after, on his way to drive off his rival and annex the hinds. This operation was subsequently carried on in our full view, but too far off for a shot. At length we retraced our steps, inch by inch, until we were over a ridge and out of sight. Another long round, another crawl, and I lay behind a boulder watching the ten-pointer a good 200yds. away. The beast never would stand still. I was panting and exhausted. I had almost forgotten what it felt like to stand upright. "Alec, I do not like the shot." "But you must tak' it, sir," was the rejoinder. "Can't we get to that next stone yonder?" "It canna' be done." And so I paltered with the opportunity. It was by far the best stag I had seen that season, and I simply hated to fire and miss. For at least five minutes I covered him, high up behind the shoulder, but feared to press the trigger. Half-a-dozen times the finger crooked. Each time the stag had moved. But the end came at last. He stood, at length, in a bad light, but a fair broadside shot, 210 paces away, as we afterwards stepped it. The shot was fired. The smoke cleared. There was the stag trotting along the hill. "It's all right, sir," said Alec. But I gave him a second barrel and—he fell dead. This stag carried the best-topped ten-point head I have ever killed. He was shot just behind the heart, and I do not know to this day which bullet of the two killed him, though Alec said it was the first.

It has at times been my fortune to assist in a deer drive. In the birch and pine forests—what is left of them—of bonnie Scotland are generally to be found the heaviest and best-conditioned stags. The modern sportsman is occasionally inclined to forget that the red deer is by nature a woodland animal. His reddish brown coat harmonises exactly with woodland cover; more particularly when Nature has painted into woodland landscape her autumn tints of birch and fern and mountain ash. The latter-day open deer-forest of Scotland is largely an artificial production, none the less affording good sport, hard work, and scientific stalking, in which knowledge of wind and ground and the habits of the deer is essential; but still artificial in the sense that the natural environment of the wild animal in question has been changed by the hand of man. I have never been able to find out exactly how and why the great pine forests that extended so widely through Scotland centuries ago, and whose roots and trunks the peat-cutter is still constantly turning up, were destroyed. There is every reason to believe that the ancient stag-hunting of English and Scottish kings was largely woodland sport. Now the descendants of these ancient woodland deer, who carried stronger and heavier heads than anything dreamt of now, are perforce driven on to open moorland and bare hillside and heather-clad corrie, to be spied and kept on the move, and scientifically stalked from afar in a manner impossible in their original and natural woodland environment. They have increased in numbers, no doubt, but decreased in size and weight of body and strength of horn. But the driving or moving of them to rifles, where circum-

stances permit, still remains good sport and affords difficult shooting. It also requires generalship of a high order.

On the North Coast of Scotland, facing the Northern Atlantic breezes, and hard by the Kyle of Tonge, stretches a thick birch wood for a mile or more, with arched glades and soft beds of moss and fern and grass, here and there rocky dells and ravines and trickling burns, all supplying cover and feed such as red deer love. Many years ago the writer lay one fine Sabbath afternoon, in the latter end of August, on a hillock not far from the lodge, spying the recesses of this wood. There had been talk of a big stag that harboured there. One day we had driven the wood and killed a roebuck, but no stag had been seen. Our faith in the existence of the stag was shaken. The birch wood ran up in a point towards the heather-covered slopes that led by easy gradations to the foot of Ben Loyal, two or three miles away. At this point was a long ridge or hillock with birch-clad sides, but the shoulders of it were bare. Later on it was a favourite drive for blackcock. The glass was idly turned in that direction, when a movement of life caught my eye and galvanised

attention. There, plainly visible on the shoulder, appeared a fine stag rubbing his horns against a tree. I watched him for half-an-hour or more, vainly wished it was a weekday, made him out to be a grand ten-pointer, and returned to consult with Donald how, later on, to compass his destruction. A vain hope, never destined to be realised. Every morning for a week we spied the wood, but no stag was seen. Donald was confident the beast was there. Next in order we drove that birch wood in all manner of ways, from time to time, with rifles posted, after careful consideration of wind and ground, on the most scientific principles. The stag entered thoroughly into the spirit of the contest, with a cunning that was almost uncanny. His favourite manœuvre was to go back through the beaters, who yelled and threw their sticks at him. But no rifleman ever caught a glimpse of his red-brown hide. What became of him after going back we could not discover. Towards the end of



THE DEER DRIVING PARTY.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

THE LEADER OF THE HERD.

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September we tried a final drive; the stag, as usual, went back, and the drivers, some dozen in all, collected after the drive was over just outside the birch-clad hillock at the point of the wood already mentioned. Three riflemen straggled up from distant posts, handed their rifles, carefully unloaded, to the men, and all lay down to smoke a pipe of consolation. I had on this occasion gone with the drivers through the centre of the covert, but had seen no deer.

Strolling slowly back through arching birch-wood and grassy glen, I happened to come out close to the hillock in question, and, more by chance than design, made my way through the thickest of its cover, not 100 yds. in length, towards the group of drivers and rifles in the glen. What was that yellow-

white patch through the trees? As I gazed with rising pulse, a fat pair of deer-haunches vanished from my ken, and the rush of a heavy animal through the covert became plainly audible. Then outside I heard a chorus of shouts and exclamations. The stag trotted majestically out of the covert, within 50 yds. of the men and the empty rifles reposing on the heather, and disappeared over the sky-line in the direction of Ben Loyal. That was the last we ever saw of that fine ten-pointer. For the rest of that season, at all events, he shook the dust of the birch-woods by the sea from off his cloven hoofs, and no doubt, in due course, took his full share in the wild, free life and in the love and war of his kind then just commencing in the open forest.

WEMMERGILL MOORS.

A GOOD DAY IN THE "SHIPKA PASS."

ANYONE who may chance to notice the above title, and who has had the good fortune to have been present at a good day in the Shipka Pass at Wemmergill, will agree with the writer that, as far as grouse-driving is concerned, he has tasted of the *very* best day's sport that can be provided in this country. A good day on this particular beat means a combination of good weather, good driving, a very large proportion of high birds, accurate shooting, and all-round management of the highest order.

Wemmergill is a moor of some eleven thousand acres, situated about six miles from Middleton-in-Teesdale, Yorkshire, the "march" running right up to the Westmorland county boundary. The moor is practically divided into two, of which the Shipka Pass is on the south side; the valley between, about a mile wide, consists of grass fields, through the centre of which run the upper waters of the river Tees; sea-trout and a few salmon make their way up even to these far-away pools, but, owing to the distance from the sea, they are not free takers, and the man who confines himself to trying to make a basket with the fly will be generally disappointed. The lodge is well built and comfortable, and at the time I am writing of was in the possession of Lord Westbury, who held it on a long lease, and had reduced the organisation and working of the moor to a fine art, ably seconded by the then head-keeper, Collinson. This moor came into prominence in the seventies by the wonderful bag which the late Sir F. Milbank made to his own gun when one of a party driving the Wemmergill and Green-Green beats. On that occasion his bag was 728 grouse, the rest of the party accounting for about as many more. In 1872, 17,064 grouse were killed on this moor; and for the years between 1887 and 1893 the average bag was over 6,000 birds per season, which includes two practically blank years, viz., 1891, when 1,826 were killed, and 1892, when there was no shooting. The Shipka beat is the most sporting one, and I will try and give a short account of a particular "red-letter day" on it.

Breakfast at 8.30 a.m.; a fine morning late in August, with no fog (the bane of this country); the party consisting of seven or eight fairly useful guns. On a side table eight luncheon-baskets are arranged with the future owner's name written on each; the wise man fills his luncheon-basket before breakfast, as it is much easier

to estimate what one's appetite is likely to be about one or two o'clock before a good breakfast than after. The ordinary stoppage for lunch had been abolished here, very wisely, as, perhaps, those who happened to be in luck between one and two o'clock might have big drives and therefore many birds to pick up, and by the time they had done this, conscientiously, they would find lunch over and the next drive just beginning; so each man was provided with his own little basket, and supposing

he had had a small drive, and picked up his birds quickly, about one o'clock he would make the best of his way to the next line of butts, perhaps a mile or more off, and lunch with anyone else who was ready for it, thus saving a lot of valuable time and ensuring careful picking up.

For a big day here you required some 500 or 600 cartridges, and this is more than any two men could carry for miles up and down hill, over the moor to the boxes; accordingly a stout little hill-pony and pony-boy were provided for each gun; over the pony's saddle a sack, sewn up at each end and open in the middle, in one end of which the majority of your cartridges were put, in the other your mackintosh, luncheon-basket, and remainder of your cartridges to balance. If you were lazy, or not so active as you had been in years gone by, these sturdy, sure-footed little ponies would carry you also, at their own steady pace, for miles across the heather and boggy places to within a short walk of the line of butts. The Shipka Pass beat consists of a great oblong stretch of heather and rushy grasses of about 4,500 acres, through the centre of which what in August is a small stream, but in the winter and spring is a raging torrent, has eaten its way for countless ages, until it has made a deep gully, *i.e.*, The Pass. The first drive of the day is over the top end, where this gully is comparatively shallow, giving just enough cover for the boxes, but, owing to the sky-line being very close, you get the shortest of sight at your birds as they come, and though not high as a rule, they are by no means easy to kill, especially if the wind is behind them. The next drive is lower down the gully, where it has become wider and deeper; the third, fifth, sixth, and seventh drives of the day are over the deepest part, where it is, perhaps, forty-five feet deep at the top end, and nearer seventy than sixty feet at the lower end. These four drives are perfection; all the birds are fairly high,

and some real "corkers." You never see your bird until he is at an angle of about 70 deg.; it is very difficult to calculate the pace at which he is flying, and, owing to the cliff behind your butt, once birds have passed you it is very difficult to get in a second barrel before they have passed out of sight.

But to go on with the account of this particular day. After leaving the lodge the small army of guns, loaders, retrievers, ponies, etc., cross the river Tees and make their way for about two

miles until near the head of The Pass; ponies are sent under cover, cartridges sufficient for the first drive being taken, and after drawing lots for butts (moving two up from the right each time), you make the best of your way to your particular butt, being most careful not to show yourself more than you can possibly help, as these Yorkshire grouse are terribly wild even in August. The writer has often noticed with mingled pain and amusement on these occasions the masters bent double and



E. Yeoman.

A GROUSE BUTT.

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carefully stalking up to their boxes, followed by their loaders, who scorn to use such vile subterfuge and walk as near the skyline as is convenient to them, discussing the latest odds or scandal at the top of their not too melodious voices, though there are brilliant exceptions to the above, where the loader seems to take as much and even greater interest in the success of the day as his master or anyone else. The first drive brings in the birds from the north end of the beat, and as the beaters are all lined out and ready to start directly the signal is given, the grouse begin to come almost as soon as we are in our places. The guns who have drawn the centre boxes should have the best fun here, unless the wind is very strong, or the flankers have gone to sleep, which, so far as the writer's experience goes, *never* occurs in Yorkshire, all hands are much too keen to let their attention wander for a moment from the business in hand. The shots in this drive are fairly easy, except for the short sky-line. No. 2 drive next takes place a short distance further down the gully, and as this drive brings in a lot of high ground to the right front of the line of boxes, it is a most important and very often a very good one, for, if the weather has been wet and stormy, many of the big packs will have moved on to this high ground. On the occasion I am trying to describe a lot of birds in this drive broke back and out to the flanks, and it was not so good as we had hoped for, but they nearly all swung back into the

body of the "packs" took after passing the line of butts, and arrange for the return drive accordingly. He was also able to see what sort of work the different occupants of the boxes were putting in at the big packs (and chaff them afterwards). The writer was fortunate in being in a box from which the whole scheme of this drive was visible, *i.e.*, No. 2. The Pass here turns at an awkward angle, and as it is, of course, most important to have all the butts in a straight line, Nos. 1 and 2 boxes were just on the sky-line of the gully, but a good view of the drive was possible from them; No. 3 was just below the ridge, and Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 were at the bottom. As soon as we were all in our boxes the signal (a quick double shot) was fired, which told the drivers it was time to start; great packs of grouse could be seen in the far distance, moving about in all directions.

The drivers are bringing in a huge basin-shaped stretch of heather and long rushy grass. As the wind is from the right and blowing rather strong, it will be a difficult job to push the birds over the left centre of the line, which is the point desired in view of the remaining drives of the day. Shortly after the drive has started and when you can first catch sight of the distant forms or flags of the drivers, an enormous pack, which increases in numbers as it comes along, makes a dash upwind to break out over the right, but is skilfully turned by the right flankers, who lie down out of sight till the last minute and then jump up,



E. Yeoman.

A YORKSHIRE MOOR.

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drive again, behind the line of drivers, so our host had hopes of getting them to come again, in the fourth drive over the same ground, with the excellent results described hereafter. The third drive is still further down the valley, and over the highest, or deepest—whichever way you like to put it—part of the Shipka Pass, but owing to so many birds having broken back in the previous drive, this one was not so prolific as the fifth drive over the same line of butts, described more fully later on; still, a very large number of birds *did* come, and we had a rare good sporting drive. The fourth drive, by far the most important of the day, now took place, as it brings in a very large tract of country, including the whole of the high ground mentioned in the second drive, and a fine bit of flat moor which, in a good year, is always thickly populated with grouse, as well as some high ground to the left of the line of butts; in addition to all the birds put into this drive from the last were all those that had broken back in No. 2 drive, so those who *knew* expected something out of the ordinary; and they were right. It so happened that Collinson, the head-keeper, and a past-master in the art of managing his grouse, was unfortunately ill on this particular day; in most places this would have been an irreparable disaster, but our host undertook the duties of commander-in-chief, and right well he managed, sitting on the side of a hill well away to the flanks, glasses in hand, so that he could follow the direction which the

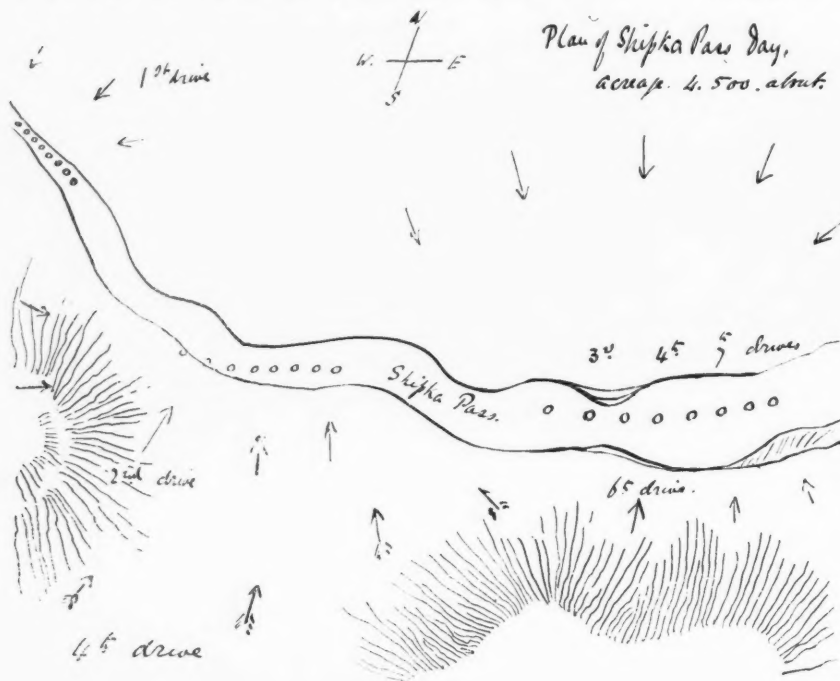
shouting and waving different-coloured flags, which effectually turn the pack. This lot are evidently determined not to come to the line of butts, being probably led by an old Parliamentary hand, who has played this game before. They accordingly make straight back for the centre of the line of drivers; again they are turned by the shouts and waving flags, and sweeping round, make for the downwind flank at a great pace. No flags could stop or turn these birds now, but, all of a sudden, the pack *does* turn, and if you look at the line of left flankers you will see a little spot hovering over their heads just in the place for which the pack is making. This is a kite very skilfully worked by one of the head-men; the pack has seen it, and swings round and comes very swiftly on a side wind straight for the line of butts.

The moor in front seems to be a mass of moving, shimmering wings; a mad thought enters your head that you might do a lot of execution by "browning" them as they come straight for you, but, independent of the unsportsmanlike nature of this operation, it is perfectly useless, for as sure as fate if you try and "brown" a pack without picking a bird, no result will come from your effort, except, perhaps, a few feathers and a poor bird going away wounded. It is extraordinary how very seldom you kill two birds at one shot, even when carefully picking two crossing birds close together, or two that are apparently almost one behind the other! The most difficult thing for one who is

not accustomed to tackle these big packs is to pick the right bird and go on quietly, but swiftly, selecting a succession of the

are at the top end or lower end of the line; you have no means of gauging the strength of the wind up there, and have no sight of your birds until they are at an angle of 70deg., so you must keep your eyes skinned and your tail up or you won't do much good. Behind you another cliff rises, and here again the birds disappear with wonderful quickness, giving very little chance to do much good in that direction. Every now and then a pack will swing down the valley, getting higher and higher as they go, and offering splendid sporting shots to each gun in succession. It is a very pretty sight to watch them coming like this, and see the way in which some "masters of the art" pull them down with deadly regularity from the sky, and how others of the party have, apparently, no shot in their guns, or only a little salt for the tail! The chances are, if you keep on the alert all the time, and are shooting at the top of your form, you may get from forty to eighty birds at this drive; every one of these gives you a throb of satisfaction. After the drive is over picking up is easier than usual, and if you have not had time for lunch before, now is your opportunity, as you will have plenty of time before the next drive starts.

Luncheon being over, it is time to be in one's box and ready for the sixth drive, which is a return drive over the same boxes as the last, and this and the last drive of the day are again over the highest and deepest part of the Shipka. One changes boxes after each drive, so the birds come at different angles, and there is no sameness about it. Right up to the last birds come fast and high, one gun certainly getting seventy-five birds to wind up his day with, which gives some idea of the enormous number of grouse on these Yorkshire moors. The total bag for this day was 1,170 brace; a desperate job to get this great number up to the lodge; the last lot did not arrive till 2 a.m. ARTHUR ACLAND HOOD.

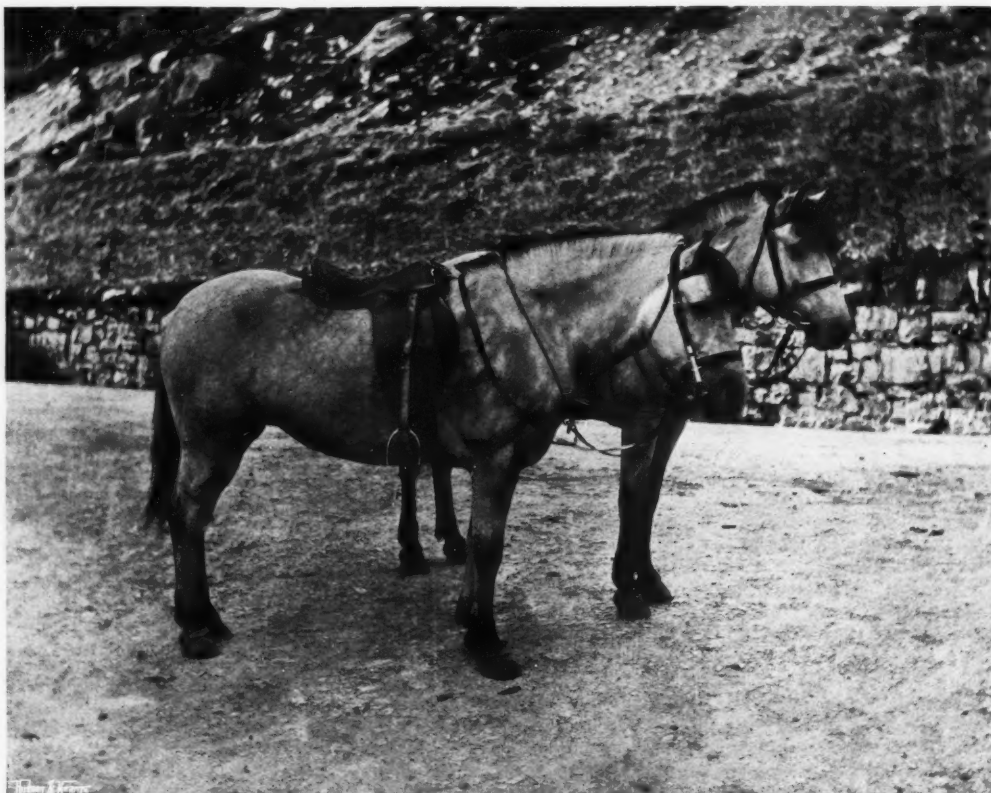


PLAN OF SHIPKA PASS.

same at more or less the same angle, whilst dozens and hundreds more are passing you all the time. On this occasion the pack was so large that it spread over nearly the whole line of butts, everyone getting from four to seven or eight chances, those who confined themselves to shooting at birds to their front as long as possible, and keeping cool, doing better than others who turned round and did not keep their heads. Shortly after this great pack had passed, others of from 20 to perhaps 250 kept continually coming—there seemed to be no end to them. Guns got nearly red hot, and those who had a spare gun found it came in very useful; now and then another big lot of 400 or 500 would come, and, to make a long story short, the result of the drive was 370 brace. The head-driver said he thought they had put between 6,000 and 8,000 grouse over the line of butts.

Two guns on this occasion picked up 270 birds between them for this one drive, besides a few more found by the keeper the following day. This naturally made them late in getting to their butts for the next drive, which was over the highest part of the Shipka Pass; it was after 2 p.m., and they had had no time for lunch.

This fifth drive and the next two are perfection. It was here that the Emperor of Germany had his first taste of grouse-driving when staying with Lord Lonsdale some years ago. The party came all the way from Lowther—sixty miles—and had a short day in a very moderate year, but it must have given the Emperor a good idea of what grouse-driving is like, and he shot wonderfully well, by all accounts. The guns move down The Pass about half a mile from the fourth drive, the butts are on the edge of the stream which runs down and joins the Tees a mile away; the bottom of the gully is short grass and stones, so that birds are easier to pick up here than in the long heather, except some which may fall into the stream and be carried down till they find a Testing-place in some miniature pool below. In front of your box, almost within shot, the cliff rises to a height of from 50ft. to 70ft., according to whether you



J. Munro.

BOUND FOR THE HILLS.

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FULLY EQUIPPED.

There is, however, one old and valued companion of the sportsman who has temporarily disappeared from the field in the South—we mean the shooting pony. Formerly, he was a family institution and a pillar of the house where old-fashioned sport prevailed. Every large house near hilly ground had its shooting pony, whose accomplishments varied with what was required of it, and the degree to which its owner used actually to shoot from its back. Its main use was for its master to ride it to the scene where the day's sport was to begin, and to ride it home again. Shooting carts are quite modern inventions. All the locomotion to and from the scene of the sport was done on ponies, if the distance was at all considerable, or if the sportsman was elderly, and, as was usually the case then with elderly gentlemen, was at all troubled with gout. If the pony was not used to carry its master during the day, it was handed over to that useful aid the "mounted marker," who figures so largely in Colonel Hawker's accounts of his partridge shooting over the fields at Whitchurch. These ponies became interested in the sport, just as they become interested in polo playing, or in hunting. It is said that the ponies of some of the harbourers on Exmoor can often smell the deer.

Mr. C. Lancaster, the eminent gun-maker, tells me that a well-known Berkshire squire, the late Mr. Philipps of Culham, had shooting ponies that would point—that is, as I gather from local tradition, they would take him up to the dogs pointing, and stand "backing" the dogs, like a rock, till the birds had risen and he had fired. Mr. Philipps suffered from a weakness which prevented him walking his game, but he used to train his shooting ponies so well that they would take him anywhere up to the birds. He also used to break his dogs when riding his ponies, so that both dogs and ponies knew what was wanted, and understood the whole business in a way which would have been unlikely had each been trained separately. This gentleman was also able to go up to the moors and shoot grouse by the same means, and would make as good or even a better bag than anyone else. It would be difficult to picture a more pleasant and creditable way of meeting a physical barrier to the enjoyment of a field sport, which, in those days, before driving was as general as it is now, was

always supposed to necessitate the possession of unusually good limbs and physical strength.

The use of pointers and setters made it much easier to employ the pony in a day's partridge shooting than at present, because the dogs, whether directed by the rider or not, as he pleased, worked to his hand, or to that of the keeper, and he could then ride up to the point, drop the reins, and shoot his birds from the pony's back; or, if he preferred, could slip off and walk up. If the pony was ridden up, it was trained to stand with its near side towards the point, not "head on," so that the shooter was able to "swing" easily, which he could not do if shooting from the off side. In Devonshire, among the steep hills and coombs, a pony formed a regular part of a shooting party, even if not used to go up to the points. It was often the keeper's property, being ridden up by his boy, with a couple of kegs of cider slung to the saddle, and two large bags to hold the rabbits. It carried the master later, or gave a lift to any member of the party who felt tired on the way to luncheon, and took home the game in the evening. On the very first "first of September" at which the present writer ever assisted, when a very small boy, he and his brother were both put on to the shooting pony and sent up to the top of the 500ft. cliff overlooking the sea from a waste of yellow gorse. It was the custom then to start

shooting at six a.m., and we were three parts of the way up the hill before we heard the guns firing below. The pony pricked up his ears and began to scramble so fast up the steep side of the furze brake that we nearly slipped off. But we reached the verge of the great cliff, with its miles of blue sea below, and the great mass of purple cliff stretching far across the bay to westwards, and saw from the pony's back perhaps the loveliest view for form and colour in all England across Sidmouth Bay. Just then a general discharge on the steep-side below was followed by the rush of a covey of partridges past

our heads, of which one, a hard-hit bird, fell dead by the pony's feet. We were "blooded" with this bird's gore on our hands



TWO VETERANS.



PATIENTLY WAITING.

and our boots, which hung against the animal's side, and so were entered to partridge-shooting on horseback. Shooting many years later with a Devonshire squire and parson (he combined both activities with great success), he rode all day, having the gout in his feet, his pony taking him over the very rough enclosed ground close to Dartmoor in the greatest comfort. Many of the moors have now such good roads up them that shooting carts and motors are used to reach the ground. But there are other moors where ponies are indispensable still. There is an indigenous breed, the "fell ponies," which are specially suited for this work. Lord Lonsdale uses one to reach some of his distant hill-ground both on the lonely fells of Shap and the Westmorland mountains. On the Scotch moors the grouse pony brings out the luncheon, and takes back prodigious numbers of birds in the panniers. Just as the pointer and setter, though obsolete in most parts of England, are now exported and regularly used in the rough, uncultivated parts of the Colonies, America, and the East, so the shooting pony is an absolute necessity in many similar regions. The Boer ponies were all trained shooting ponies when game abounded on the veldt. Their

owners used to beat cover with them, and shoot from their backs at small buck, or, when stalking large game, would often use the pony as a screen. The Boer shooting pony is taught to stand still the moment the reins are dropped upon his neck. In the great West of America, the shooter, when hunting antelope on the plains, throws his bridle over the pony's head, and dismounts to fire. In the Scotch forests the hill pony is a regular assistant after a day's successful stalking. He brings home the deer, according to what must be an immemorial custom. "Getting up" the stag on to his back and fastening it there has formed the subject of many a striking picture of the close of a day's mountain sport, from the days of Sir Edwin Landseer to those of Mr. Thorburn. It should be added that the shooting pony is indispensable in Central Asian sport, where the Kirghiz hunters use them both to drive and shoot wild sheep from. It is also employed in Japan, where, after being used as a stalking pony to approach ducks and geese with a goshawk, it is employed, now that hawking is forbidden in parts of Japan because it is "cruel," to shelter the gunner creeping up to fowl on the rice-fields.



THE RETURN FROM SHOOTING.

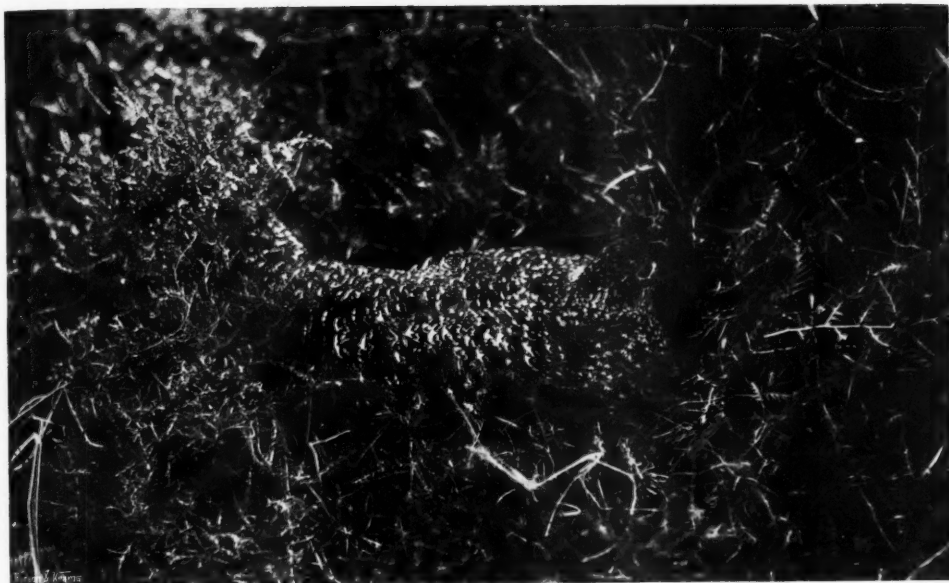
After Wheatley.

GROUSE PROSPECTS.

PERHAPS there has never been a year when it was more difficult to make a general forecast of the prospects for the Twelfth. It never is an easy forecast. In the first place, there is always the human element to be considered—that is to say, the temperament of the individual who makes the forecast at first hand. Allowance has to be made for this. Your keeper who is a pessimist will raise you very different expectations from the keeper who is an optimist. It is perhaps the one function for which we prefer the former temperament, the latter being conducive to such biting disappointment. But even apart from that, it is very difficult for a man going over the moor before birds have begun to fly to form any just idea of their number. How difficult it is has been proved to us again and again by the absurdly wild estimates that we have heard in previous years. Only last year was a striking instance in point; we suffered, generally speaking, a very agreeable surprise. The forecasts were woe:ful; we were told that moors would not be worth shooting at all. In the result, a record bag was made on at least one moor in Yorkshire, and in

Scotland, if it was not a "bumper" year, it was a fair average season, with a tendency to improve as it went on. That was a characteristic of the year—that the birds did not show in anything like their true numbers on the first time of asking, because a great many of the early broods had been destroyed, and the later hatches were still so small that the birds let themselves be walked over by the beaters rather than get up and come on to the guns. By the second and third times over, these birds had gained their power of flight, and came bravely on, rather to the astonishment and delight of those who had been disappointed at the first shoot.

And here we touch a point that has more than a historical and illustrative interest in connection with the prospects for this year. The connection is direct, for what is meant by such a state of things as we have been noticing is that a very good stock was left at the end of last year, and, other things being equal, that of course is as much as to say that there was a good breeding stock in the spring. Other things have, on the whole, been equal; that is to say, that the winter and spring developed



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

NESTING GROUSE.

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no particular elements likely to be disastrous to the grouse population. The birds have had a fair chance. There was some heavy snow, it is true, over most of the North, but it came "just in time not to be too late" for the nesting grouse—in a general way of speaking, that is to say, for of course the grouse are a little earlier in some parts than in others. When the mother grouse is sitting she is very enduring of cold, but heavy snow is more than she bargains for. This spring the snow coming just before the usual nesting cannot have done much damage generally, except in delaying operations. Those of us who live in the South have had a June deluge such as we cannot remember before, but that deluge has been rather restricted in its area. It did not extend North, and even had it done so it would not have done the grouse much harm. On a properly drained moor, and with drains properly made—namely, with sloping sides, so that the birds can scramble out again if they get in—there ought never to be many deaths from drowning.

Therefore, on the argument from the stock left for breeding purposes, and the character of the season, we have every right to expect a fair shooting year; and possibly this is a sounder way of argument than any other. On the other hand, we have to pay attention, and, as a rule, perhaps are disposed to pay too much attention, to reports of keepers from various parts. These reports are as conflicting as could be wished if their deliberate purpose were to darken counsel. From the Border have come sensational reports of an immense destruction of birds by disease, and so sudden and sensational was the news that, for this very reason, if for no other, it aroused suspicion. Still, one never knows; it may be

true, or it may be only the vain imagining of a jaundiced keeper. It is contradicted both by our *a priori* argument already stated, and also by reports received from other places, as for instance from Ayrshire, which, after all, is not so very far north of the Border, where they claim that the prospect is for one of the best seasons ever known; but this again may be coloured by an optimistic keeper with the roseate hue in which his fancy has adorned it. From other districts the reports are fair and moderate, without extravagance in either sense; so that the inference which one is disposed to draw from a general view and balancing of the divers reports is that the grouse are likely to be a little "patchy," but that on the whole the year is likely to be rather better than is generally indicated by the term "patchy." Here and there there will be a failure, a moor that hardly will be worth the shooting, but on the whole the shooting will be well worth while and well up to the average. That is

about the way in which the situation appears after an impartial review; and it is a satisfactory enough appearance when all things are considered. The North seems to have decidedly the better prospects. In the neighbourhood of Aviemore, on the Highland line, we do indeed hear of great numbers of birds dead of disease, but the very extravagance of the lists of mortality that have reached us gives ground for suspicion, and for the rest, the accounts from Perthshire, Inverness-shire, and Aberdeen-shire are promising enough, and so, too, from the more northern moors again. It may be taken as a maxim that the average keeper, whatever his temperament, has a certain interest in depreciating his stock. If he underrates it and confesses that it is in a state of comparative failure, whether from disease or other cause, he is seldom blamed, even by the most exacting employer, for the failure, and when the shooting-time comes, if the bags are better than his promise, the owner, or tenant, is so much the more pleased, because of the joyful surprise.

To be sure there are those with estates to let, either on commission or otherwise, whose interest lies all the other way, in the direction of painting all the prospects in the fairest colours; and without imputing any dishonest intent, it is possible to suppose that some of the letters written to the papers to contradict the gloomy accounts are coloured by the wishes of those who write them. The prevalent impression that the grouse season of 1903 will be a "patchy" one, seems, "taking one consideration with another," to be correct enough; though our present opinion is that the year will turn out, like last year, somewhat better than is expected of it.

IN THE REARING FIELD.

IF the phenomenally bad weather of two successive Junes has taught any lesson except that of the uncertainty of all things in this world, it is that of the hopelessness of depending in any degree on wild pheasants. There are a few estates, notably that of Beaulieu, where circumstances are so favourable that a large head of wild birds may be relied upon in almost any year; but on average ground, even of a favourable kind, cold and drenching rains in June, following early frosts, for two seasons, and in some parts of England for no less than three, have killed off each year nearly the whole stock of wild-bred birds. When to these crushing accidents of weather and temperature are added the losses by foxes, and the risks to which the nests are exposed in the woods, from human and other egg-stealers, it is obvious that to rely on having birds at all, the sportsman must rear artificially, and, further, that he should rear the whole maximum of what he thinks he ought to kill. If there are wild birds, well and good. They will be the unearned



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THEIR FIRST MEAL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



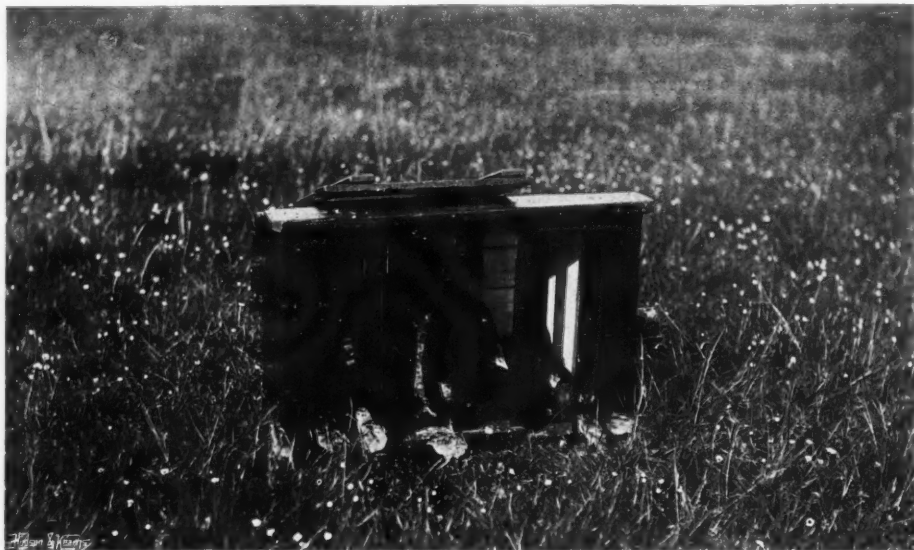
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IN THE SETTING-BOXES.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

increment, for which he may be thankful. But the maxim, "Blessed is he who expecteth nothing," is never more true than in shooting returns. The owner will first decide how and to what extent he is going to rear. As regards the first, he may be quite indifferent to the means and the cost, if he only gets the number of birds he wants to shoot at. That is a very easy way; only as it needs no explanation, it is outside the scope of this article. On the other hand, he may have a head-keeper who has usually done well, both as regards cost and results, and prefer to leave him to manage as he usually does. That is a course which has a good deal to recommend it. Lastly, both he and his keeper may be "progressive," anxious to make every sovereign go as far as possible, and to get the maximum return in sport for the money spent. This course involves a good deal of trouble, and the results are never final. Nevertheless, there is a great return in satisfaction from trying to carry it out. In the first place, the question of eggs has to be considered. These remarks, be it noted, are intended for next season's practice, only as, on the system advocated, steps for next season will be taken very early in this one, it is as well to think matters over before the guns are taken out, and while

keeper can always pick out the largest and most forward. These birds are the earliest and best layers next spring.



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HEN CALLING THE POULTS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Probably hens a year older would lay rather more eggs. But as these would have to be caught in the coverts, the other objection named above would occur. The other side—there always is another side—is that these hens have to be kept from October till April before they are wanted to lay. But this is not difficult. From twenty-five to two hundred and fifty can be put in one large pen. For the latter number the enclosure should be over two acres. The food during that time would be ordinary barley meal and biscuit meal, prepared as if for chickens, in the morning, and in the afternoon a feed of mixed grain. The tendency is invariably to over-feed. Remember that in the woods, especially in February and March, the birds would have to work hard to get a meal twice a day, and that even then they only seek food for about three hours in the morning and two hours in the evening, food which they may have to collect laboriously from an old stubble field which has been foraged over for four or five months every morning and evening. No waste food should ever lie about. After March 1st the birds can be caught up and transferred to large single pens holding twenty-five birds each (nineteen hens



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FIXING THE SHUTTERS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

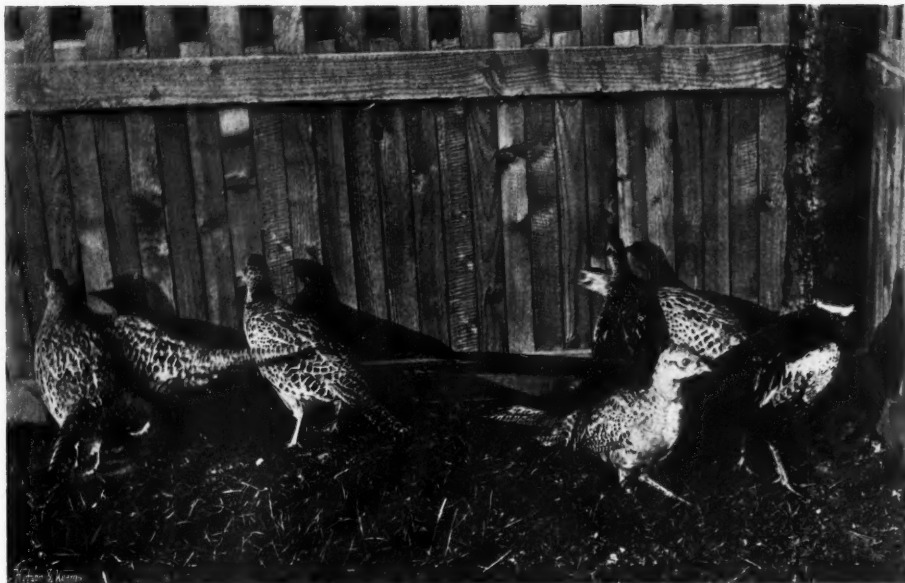
and six cocks). This is cheaper than the older method of putting only half-a-dozen birds in each, and the birds do not fight or disturb each other, though the tops of the pens may be left open for wild birds to enter. The tame birds' wings are cut or "brailed." The food is now improved. It is more abundant, and the best "graves" and some dates can be added. It is also a good plan to let them have turnip-tops or thousand-headed kale and biscuit meal.

The date of laying is uncertain, but so fed they will often begin on or soon after April 1st. The eggs are dropped about the pen, and must be picked up by the keeper every morning, and should never be left lying about. Each hen will produce about thirty good eggs. In other words, she will go on laying for a month. Many hens will do more than this, and if late birds are wanted as well as early ones, a second sitting can be prepared for. In any case the first sitting of eggs, which have been kept in bran in shallow pans, and turned every few days, will be put under the hens about May 1st. The nests are all made in sitting-boxes, as here shown, which have no bottoms, and are made in blocks of six compartments, which is a handy size to move. A cow-shed, linhey, or old wood-house does well enough. Some keepers put their sitting-boxes in the open, in the coverts close to their house, a plan which answers so long as there are no foxes.

Turf with some hay on it makes the nest bottom and nest. It is in some cases better to buy the sitting hens outright, and to sell them at the end of the season. Prices vary from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d., according to district and demand. On a shooting in which the present writer is "interested" in the heart of the downs the keeper was very indignant when someone else in an unneighbourly way raised the price in the neighbourhood from 1s. 3d., at which it had stood from such time as pheasant rearing began there, to 1s. 6d. "I don't see how we be goin' to live if they keep robbin' we like this," he remarked. Fourteen eggs is enough for each hen. These obliging incubating machines have the great advantage that they can call the young pheasants, and so fetch the rather stupid creatures in out of the rain, or tell them to come to meals, or avoid danger. Otherwise, doubtless, incubators proper would take their place. There is a great difference between the calling powers of hens. Some which call well will collect half the young birds from each of the adjacent coops.

The hens should be fed every morning at 6.30, and the chickens, when hatched, taken in baskets to the rearing field, where for the first two days the arrangement of boards seen in the picture both keeps them from straying and shelters them from the wind. For the first week they are fed six times a day on hard-boiled egg, both white and yolk, pressed through a sieve, and on a little biscuit meal prepared with steam, preferably than with water. The greatest care should be taken all along to prevent waste and over-feeding. In very bad weather an extra meal a day does good. Otherwise it is far better to keep the birds short, and let them forage round a little for themselves. In the second week the birds are fed four times a day, and ordinary prepared meal is substituted for eggs and pheasant meal. The birds should be given water daily, in just sufficient quantity for them to drink it up from the shallow pan into which it is poured. The water should be good household drinking water, and not drawn from a pond. Remember that the eggs of the worm which causes gapes flourish especially in damp soil round sloppy, over-filled drinking pans.

The large pheasant shown with cream-coloured shoulders and a broad white ring, which, though the portrait does not show it, does not meet in front, is the Mongolian pheasant. It is the



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MONGOLIANS.

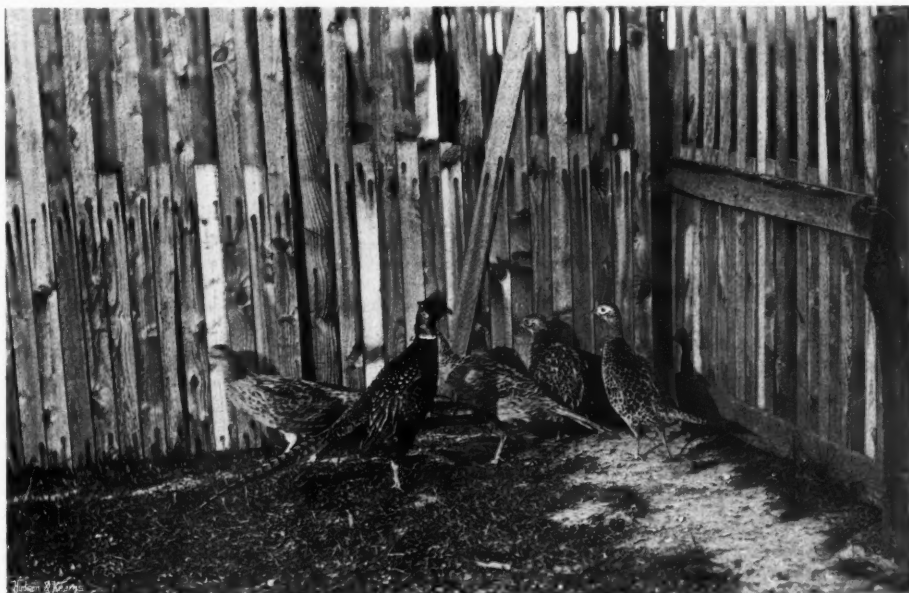
"COUNTRY LIFE."

finest and heaviest variety of the various forms of which both the common pheasant and the Chinese ring-necked bird (torquatus) are examples.

PARTRIDGE PROSPECTS.

THE destructive rains of June were at the worst in the area perhaps best described as the basin of the river Thames. This includes the valleys of all the tributaries, and the counties of Essex, Kent north of the South Downs, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, parts of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, and parts of Wiltshire. It would be impossible to exaggerate the mischief done, especially on the heavier land and low-lying ground. One of the most successful keepers of the day writes from a large estate in the Upper Thames Valley, where partridge rearing is usually carried out on a large scale: "The exceptional rain which we had from June 13th to June 20th spoilt my experiments with the new French methods of rearing entirely. We had sixty hours of rain straight off, with five inches of water in a week, very cold weather, and even frost. My nests in pens got flooded, some of the birds were made to forsake, and six birds were actually drowned. Till this weather came I was getting on all right. Nineteen sets of birds had paired naturally, and I had put them in the round pens. Thirteen pairs had begun to lay, and nine hens had begun to sit when the rain came. I got the first covey on June 25th, only twelve birds out of twenty eggs. I turned them out yesterday. Another hatched only ten out of twenty-one eggs. The eggs were fertile, but the cold rain in the nests killed the embryos. It is just the same with our wild birds. Owing to the excessive wet and cold quite ninety per cent. of the partridges left their nests. Hundreds of eggs were spoilt when on the point of hatching. The wild pheasants also fared badly. Although my tame pheasants were in a bath, I saved the majority. I have been a keeper nearly forty years, but I never experienced such a time."

In Essex, near Halstead, 400 out of 1,000 young pheasants were killed by the wet and cold by the close of Friday in the "black week." Here the



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CHINESE RING-NECKED BIRDS IN PEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

ground was heavy, and even the turkeys were dying. All the partridges, almost without exception, left their nests. There can be no partridge shooting. In Hertfordshire, which has rapidly risen to be one of the best shooting counties in England, the partridges can be nothing but a complete failure. Many died on their nests, but the majority forsook them. The only chance was when the nest was made in a wood, and on a slope, where trees or bushes broke the direct fall of the rain, and the water did not lie in the nests. Near South Mimms the river Colne, which usually disappears partly down "swallow-holes," suddenly flooded out from below ground. In half-an-hour two feet of water covered the adjacent meadows, one of which was used as a field for rearing pheasants. No less than 2,000 pheasants' eggs were swept away, and 100 hens were drowned. Further reports from the other counties named are all of the same gloomy character, except that on the lightest land, and in woodland districts, the destruction has been less general.

If the wet week had spared us, the chances for the season were exceptionally good everywhere. Consequently, partridge shooting will be good or bad, according to the distribution of the abnormal rainfall. According to the figures published, the rainfall has steadily decreased northwards, southwards, and westwards of the central area. In South Sussex and the Isle of Wight there are, in many places, excellent prospects. Reports from Yorkshire are good. Shropshire, Warwickshire, Cheshire, Lancashire, and the northern counties generally, should do well.

OLD PUBLIC-HOUSE GAMES.

OF late years the tendency of the local authorities has been to suppress these altogether, under the idea that they form additional attractions to the public-house, and if used for competition for drinks cause an increased consumption of liquor. This may be so in thickly-populated towns, where the "British Working Man" who has money to spend congregates, but in the country places, where the labourer, except on the rarest occasions, cannot afford to spend more than a few pence daily out of his income of fifteen shillings a week, the rule operates harshly, and removes some of the very little interest from the dull bucolic life.

Nine-men's morris—abroad called merelles—was more often played by shepherds and others on the turf—Shakespeare talks of the "nine men's morris is filled up with mud"—but sometimes indoors on a board. A variant of it was fox and geese, in which the game was for the geese to corner the fox up so that he could not move, and for the fox to take the geese, just as a piece is taken at draughts. This must not be confounded with the Royal Game of Goose, which was played thus: A large sheet of paper was divided into sixty-two small compartments, and one large one numbered 63 in the middle. On every fourth and fifth compartment a goose was drawn. On some of the others were imaginary obstacles—for example, a bridge, an alehouse, a fountain, a labyrinth, a prison, a grave, and a goblet. Each player throws a turn with two dice. If he is lucky enough to come on to a goose compartment he goes on double the number of his throw, if unlucky enough to pitch on the bridge he pays a forfeit to get over it, and similarly he is injured if he come to the alehouse, and worst of all if he falls on the grave, for then he has to begin again *ab initio*. Of course there were many varieties of the game, some much simpler than this, and the modern race-horse or steeplechase game with its penalties for falling at fences or ditches is its direct descendant. Roulette and all wheel games had their vogue once, but, being suppressed by law, are practically extinct. The game of shuffleboard or shovelboard, though still to be found in some parts of the country, was hardly a public-house game, owing to the length of the board, which might be anything up to 30ft., and was more at home in a baronial hall than a bar parlour. The width was from 3ft. to 3ft. 6in. The game was to push or shove leaden or brass discs (large old pennies were often used) from one end of the table to the other. A disc which was so nicely aimed at as to actually hang over the further edge of the table scored three, and other throws scored according to their relative nearness to the end. A minor variety of this was the shovel-groat or slide thrust.

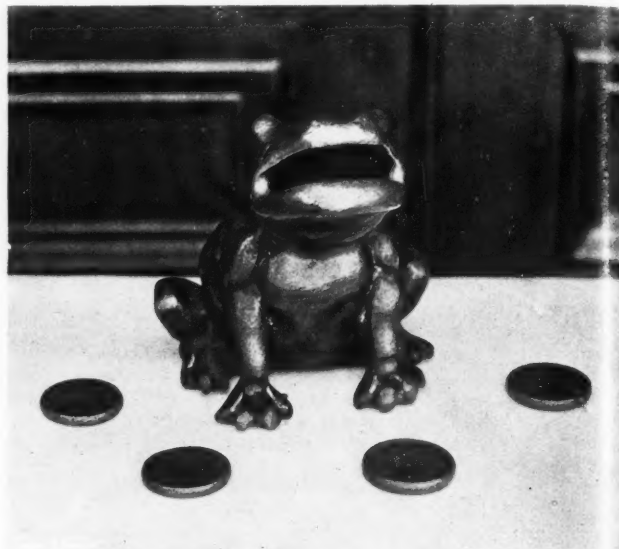
Other games, which required constant practice and great manual dexterity, were akin to the Toad in the Hole shown in the photograph, in which a large image of a toad with wide-open mouth was screwed to a table, and the player threw discs of copper—almost identical with those used at shuffleboard—into the mouth. A similar game was played by throwing the discs or pennies into a hole cut in the settle or table, and another game of skill, and one which requires a steady hand and a clear eye, was played thus: A hook was fixed to the wall of the room, which could be just reached by a ring at the end of a string or chain, and the object was, by a careful throw, to lodge the ring on the hook. If it missed, the ring and chain swung back ready for another try. Ninepins, later on called skittles (which is a corruption of kettle or kittle-pins), no doubt originated from the old game of cayles, in which the objects aimed at were like small sugar-loaves arranged in a long row broadside on to the player, who threw at them with a stick. The number of pins varied from six to eight. Loggats were played with pins.

Closh, or cloysh, was the next form of evolution, for a ball was substituted in it for the stick. All these games—for example, bowling, coytng (quoits), cloysh, cayls, half-bowls, and tennis—were rendered legal by 8 and 9 Vict., cap. 109, always presuming they are not played for money.

Target games—throwing at targets with miniature arrows or darts—are still popular throughout England, sometimes superseded, however, by the more modern blow-tube, which is not to be commended for hygienic reasons. Miniature rifle shooting—with or without Morris tubes—has taken on greatly of late, and should, we think, be encouraged. It will be remembered

that the interference with air-gun shooting by some licensing magistrates lately caused quite a *furor*.

To touch on the various games of cards once played in public-house parlours—such as all fours, roulette, roly-poly, etc.—would be to write a history of card-playing. Nowadays it is illegal to play any game of cards for money



TOAD IN THE HOLE.

or money's worth in licensed houses, though there is no law to stop playing games of skill at cards, such as whist.

Backgammon was a game played with dice, and was the lineal descendant of the game of tables so often referred to in the old romances and plays; but dice-play of all sorts is, we think, now taboo in licensed houses.

Draughts and chess, of course, have always been legal, if not played for money, and the remarkable development of the former game, reports of which fill columns of some papers, is a very interesting and hopeful sign of a desire for intellectual exercise of sorts, the germ of strategy being found in the old game of noughts and crosses, called in Ireland tiptop carte, while the noble game of coddam is as much a test of facial control as of cunning. Tossing with coins, once called cross and pile, is now very properly prohibited, though often winked at in all its varieties of odd man out, Tommy Dod, and the like. Prick the garter, though no doubt sometimes played on licensed premises, was more usual at fairs and races.

WALTER RYE.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE late Sir John Hills, who spent all his active military service in India, and whose genial figure was well known on every race-course in that country, has embodied the results of his long experience in the book *The Points of a Race-horse* (Blackwood and Sons). Its study can be confidently recommended to purchasers or intending purchasers of thorough-bred stock in this country, who are so frequently led to give extravagant prices for yearlings on the strength of their fashionable breeding, with but slight regard to their conformation, or to the obvious consideration that, unless the foal be built on racing lines, it is hopeless to expect it to inherit the galloping powers of either sire or dam.

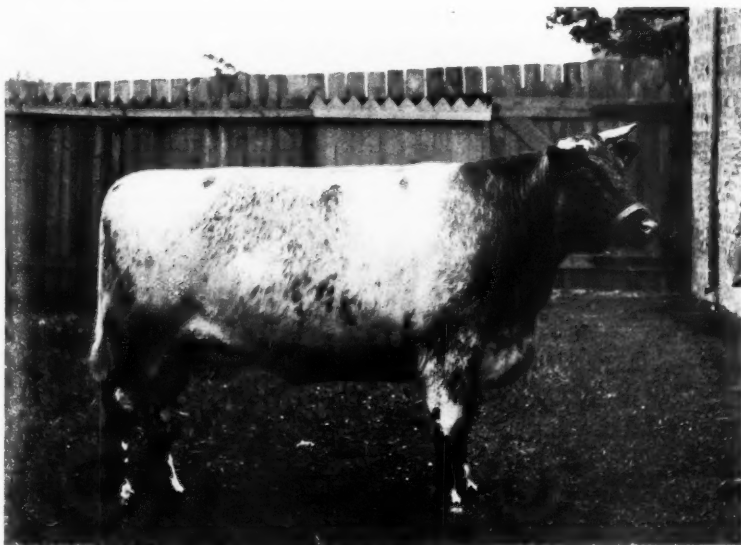
The author discusses with much thoroughness the construction of the horse as a galloping machine, and he dwells at length on the component parts which are chiefly used in motion, and on whose strength and formation the power of an animal to develop a long, swift, and powerful stride chiefly depends. He rightly, as it appears to us, insists first on the factors necessary to give the maximum of extension and propelling power of the hind leg. The femur, the bone connecting the quarter with the stifle, must be long, "ending in a low and well-developed stifle-bone and joint." This is essential for liberty of action and to enable the horse to get his legs well under him in his stride. The importance of this point is better gathered from the illustration—one of the numerous ones with which the author assists his arguments—of the action of the hind leg when galloping, as shown both by a horse and a greyhound. The length of the femur and of the stifle in the latter are the main factors in the length of stride and consequent speed, which is so remarkably superior to that of a horse when their comparative sizes are considered. What may be called the correlative movement of the fore legs is equally dependent on the position of the joints, the chief being that of the humerus forming the connection between the shoulder-blade (whose adequate slope is also an important point) and the point of the elbow. The tendency of this is naturally to slope outwards, but, as shown by the author, the nearer it approaches to the perpendicular the freer will be the action of the leg. The third point insisted on would by many

be placed first, the long quarters and muscular loins "by which," in the author's words, "the machine may be most profitably worked."

There are many illustrations—in fact, they form the chief value of the book—in elucidation of the author's thesis. Perhaps the most convincing are the photographs which are reproduced of the skeletons of Hermit, the Derby winner of 1867, and the champion sire of the nineteenth century; of Fullerton, the greyhound who never knew defeat; of a cheetah or hunting leopard; and of a lynx, reported the fastest of wild animals. In these three latter the comparatively great length of the femur and the humerus are very pronounced with the long stifle, which combine to give the play to the limbs necessary to free and rapid movement.

Of the race-horses represented, the most salient example of excellence from the author's point of view is the King's horse Parsimmon, who, like human celebrities in popular magazines, is presented to us at various ages. But there is hardly an equine celebrity of the past decade omitted—St. Simon, Galopin, Donovan, Eager, St. Frusquin, and others, whose names *prescribere longum est*, figure in the interesting series of portraits. They all possess in a greater or less degree what the author sums up as the three cardinal points: "Low and muscular stifle, perpendicular slope from shoulder to elbow and large and free elbow bone, powerful loins, and fairly long quarters."

The author states that he is rather opposed to the popular idea and acceptance of the term blood, but I think he is only attributing to imaginary opponents an exaggerated estimate of heredity. No one will question the general proposition that only animals who possess the qualifications necessary for speed and stamina can transmit them to their descendants, or the minor one, that it is hopeless to expect them to transmit them in every case. Some horses possess in a far greater degree than others the innate faculty, or prepotency, of transmitting their own points of excellence. Among them St. Simon, Hermit, and Melton are notable examples, with whom St. Frusquin and Marco bid fair to rank; others, such as Donovan and Gladiateur, have been failures at the stud, but this does not affect the justifiable preference for the offspring of first-class performers on the Turf, although it illustrates the risk of paying fancy prices for yearlings whose sole claim to command high prices is their distinguished parentage. No attempt is made to explain the failure at the stud of sires and dams to transmit their own perfections. Memoir and La Flèche are cited as examples, but Memoir has now a promising son in The Scribe, and Baroness la Flèche may be the equal of her dam, except in constitutional hardiness. In any case, the proportion of first class animals bred from the best qualified sires and dams, even in the exceptional cases of Hermit and St. Simon, is small when compared to the total number of the progeny they beget, and the purchase of yearlings must always be a gamble, with the odds very much to the disadvantage of the purchaser. While, therefore, as the records of the Turf show, the number of chance horses (those not bred from parents of proved merit) who distinguish themselves on the Turf is so small as almost to be negligible, and horses bred to win are the only ones likely to justify expectations, the lessons of the book before us may be safely accepted, and unless the construction of an animal is such as to give him the power, scope, and freedom of movement essential to fast galloping, no hereditary strain will supplement the deficiency.



G. H. Parsons.

FLORA VI.

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There is a chapter criticising Mr. Alison's figure system, which the author considers to be somewhat misleading, but want of space prevents us dealing with it further. It is, like the rest of the work, characterised by sound common-sense, which is further exemplified in the statement of the objections to the present date for ageing horses. It would be, for the reasons given, far better to alter it from January 1st to April 1st, as suggested, or, as that would interfere with the meetings held in March, to the latest practicable date before the opening of the racing season.

The work has a pathetic interest, from the fact that the author's death occurred as the sheets were going through the press; indeed, the revision of the proof-sheets had to be undertaken by a friend. Sir John was an intimate friend of the writer of this notice, who was a witness of the absorbing interest he took in the production of the result of many years' study of a congenial subject, when he visited him a few days before his death, which he himself knew to be imminent.

The author's acknowledgment to the Editor of COUNTRY LIFE of the assistance given in procuring and furnishing many of the photographs gives us a further interest in the book, which we hope will command the success the author hoped for, but has not lived to enjoy.

FROM THE FARMS.

THE HIGHLAND AND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY'S SHOW.

WE show this week photographs of an exceptionally fine shorthorn cow and of a Shropshire ram. The cow is Mr. George Harrison's Flora 6th, who at



G. H. Parsons.

SHROPSHIRE RAM.

Copyright

the Highland and Agricultural Society's Show at Dumfries distinguished herself by beating the famous White Heather of Mr. J. Deane Willis, and carrying off the female championship. This shorthorn has been awarded no less than 240 first and twelve championship prizes at all the leading shows, including the Royal, Dublin, the Highland twice, and many more. The Shropshire ram belongs to Mr. Alfred Tanner, and was first at the Royal, and afterwards got the President's prize as the best of the breed. It has been first at the Shropshire, West Midland, Hereford, and Worcester Shows, and is a most typical example of the Shropshire breed of sheep. It should be added that the Highland Show was a very good one this year, and the weather, though a little changeable, could not be described as unfavourable. Lord Onslow attended at the general meeting of the members and made a brief speech, in which he described his scheme of agricultural correspondence.

WHITE WYANDOTTES.

This variety of fowl, which is rapidly gaining popularity, owes its origin, in common with the other members of the Wyandotte family, and as its name suggests, to the American poultry-keepers. Their ideals in some respects are not coincident with ours, therefore its yellow legs and skin in some measure spoil its virtues from the English point of view. As a general-purpose fowl, however, Wyandottes generally are hard to beat. Of large medium size; very hardy, and thriving in situations that would prove unsuitable to some breeds;

easy to rear as chicks, and of quick growth; layers of fairly large brown-tinted eggs, many of which are produced in winter; not often given to broodiness, but an excellent sitter and mother, it possesses most of the desirable features of the all-round bird. The



A CHAMPION LAYER.

white Wyandotte, one of the latest selections to arrive in this country, came with a great reputation as a layer. In the language of its originators, it was going to "lick creation" in the matter of egg production, and for once the forecast has been sustained. The bird whose photograph is now given is the holder of the record of the laying competitions. She is the property of Miss Tammadge of Thatcham, Newbury, and distinguished herself by laying seventy-eight eggs in ninety-six days, a feat highly commendable, as it occurred at the worst season of the year, viz., October to February. We think this specimen, whose sisters are also prize-winners, affords a notable example of the efficacy of breeding year by year from the best layers only, a plan we have often advocated as the only sure means towards the end. Although a fair type of her kind from an exhibition point of view, she is by no means remarkable for external features. As will be seen, the shape is compact, mounted on moderately short legs. A broad short head, topped by a neat rose comb, with full bright eye, betokens a tendency towards prolific egg production. One of the difficulties in breeding this charming variety is the atavism it exhibits. Being what is known as a "composite breed," that is, arrived at by blending older established kinds, it frequently throws back to the types of its progenitors, and some proportion of the youngsters are sure to develop an undesirable length of back, and single, in place of rose, comb. This fault, however, is yearly decreasing, and with "fixity of type," added to great egg production, white Wyandottes will certainly find many fresh supporters.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS SHOW.

The annual show of the Tunbridge Wells and South-Eastern Counties Agricultural Society took place last week, and was one of the most successful of our summer exhibitions. The show-yard covers twenty acres of ground, and its appearance must have highly gratified those who remember it in the early days of the society, for this is the forty-first year in which the exhibition has been held. It began in a very small way indeed, but this year the sum of £1,600 was paid in prizes. Unluckily one of the depressing rain-storms of which we have had so many during the last year came down on the first day of the show, and in a very literal manner damped the enthusiasm of those who were present. Otherwise everything was perfect, and the collection of Shires especially was one of the best ever seen at Tunbridge Wells. It must have been a subject for congratulation to Mr. Leopold Salomons that he came out first for stallions foaled before 1901 with his massive Norbury Harold. Mr. Salomons also carried off two first prizes with Ruby Glimpse and Norbury Bliss, both of which have been illustrated in *COUNTRY LIFE*. The cattle department of the show was also a very good one, though the judging was delayed by the heavy rain. We were glad to see another local breeder at the front in the shape of Mr. J. Colman, whose splendid heifer, Hawthorn Gem 3rd, was first in her class. Mr. Thorley won in the old bull class with Silver King, and also in the yearling bull class with Ringdale Neill. Sussex cattle and Aberdeen-Angus were very well shown. In Jerseys, Mr. C. W. Armitage's beautiful cow, Farineuse 3rd, came out first, and Mrs. McIntosh's Brompton won the Wadhurst Park Cup in the class for old bulls. There was also an excellent display of Guernseys, but the show of Kerrys and Dexters was rather disappointing. In sheep the Southdowns were a large and good section; so, in a lesser

degree, were the Romney Marshes. In pigs, Major Hiscock brought out a good boar in Manor Grand Duke, and the Duchess of Devonshire won first and second in the young boars with two very fine specimens. It is much to be regretted that the weather stood in the way of a full enjoyment of this very excellent show.

POLO NOTES.

THE chief event of the past week was the first International match between Ireland and England. The All-Ireland Polo Club presented a cup, and the first annual match was played on Thursday last between two representative teams on the well-known ground in Phoenix Park. The Nine Acres is open to the public, and a first-class polo match never fails to draw an enthusiastic crowd of all classes. The Irish people seem to take naturally to polo. They understand the game, and applaud with enthusiasm their favourite players and the more brilliant strokes. No doubt the majority of the spectators would have preferred that the Irish team should have been victorious. Nevertheless they made it plain that they appreciated the fine play of the English team. Besides, after all, the captain of that team, General Rimington, is an Irishman and an Irish Dragoon. He was for some time secretary of the All-Ireland Polo Club, and is a very popular person in Dublin. The Irish four was made up of men picked from the Irish county teams—Mr. P. Connolly and Major O'Hara, County Sligo, and Mr. Watt and Mr. O'Reilly, from Derry and Westmeath respectively. The English team was composed of Lord Shrewsbury, Captain R. Ward, General Rimington, and Mr. Dudley Marjoribanks. With General Rimington to lead them, this was about as strong a four as could be picked, and they proved to be a fast and hard-hitting team. Almost from the first throw in the English team had possession of the ball, and throughout showed marked superiority as goal-hitters. General Rimington and Mr. Marjoribanks both are very hard strikers, and they kept the ball travelling at a pace that taxed the Irishmen. Yet if a side has to work as hard as England undoubtedly had, a victory cannot be called an easy one. There was some very close fighting in the second and third ten-minute periods. I am generally inclined to think that when a side makes a small score it is to be attributed to a strong defence rather than to bad luck. In this case, however, the Irish team ought to have made at least two more goals than they did.

The last week of polo at the London clubs was marked by three finals—the Hurlingham Handicap, the Public Schools' Tournament, and the Ladies' Nomination Cup—and by a fine soldiers' game at Ranelagh, of which more hereafter. The bad weather pursued us to the end, and made the watching of the play, except on Saturday, rather a disagreeable task. There was a first-rate entry for the final handicap at Hurlingham. There was no shifting of players during its course, and the tournament was marked by some excellent play. All the teams save one appeared on the ground. The first tie was played on Tuesday, and was won by A Team—Messrs. B. Wilson, W. Graham, Foxhall Keene, and G. Lockett. This was a fast team, but not very close in its combination or accurate in its passing. They defeated D Team, for which Mr. Buckmaster was playing. This game was a kind of duel between Mr. Keene and Mr. Buckmaster, but the former was in excellent form, making two glorious galloping runs and hitting goals. He had also rather better backing. When A Team met E Team—Mr. W. Burdon, Mr. J. S. Mason, Major F. Egerton Green, and Captain Hobson—there was another brilliant galloping game, but Major Egerton Green and Captain Hobson (both players who understand the game thoroughly) combined well. E Team had the command all through, and A Team (composed as above) seemed to go to pieces, and were defeated 3 goals to 1. Thus E Team met F Team—Messrs. L. Wilson, J. B. Dale, W. Roylance Court, and M. de Las Casas—in the final on Saturday. This team had won their first tie on Wednesday after a very close game. A hard-fought match often has the effect of bringing a team together and improving their combination, and as F Team had a bye on Thursday in the semi-finals, they came into the final on Saturday fresh and vigorous. In consequence they played an excellent game, and Mr. J. Dale, who has been steadily improving and also is always well mounted, being quite in his best form, they simply ran away from E Team, and won by 8 goals to 1. Of course, it must be said that E Team did not come up to their previous play till quite the end of the match, when, of course, it was too late.

It was surprising to find Ranelagh with quite an average Saturday crowd so near the end of the season. But Mr. Gill had arranged two excellent matches, of which the first was a soldiers' game. These military matches always draw spectators, though the Ranelagh band and the lunch may have something to say to this too. In these two matters Barn Elms is easily first. The match was the Household Brigade—Lord Ingestre (Royal Horse Guards), the Duke of Westminster (late Royal Horse Guards), Colonel Sir Henry Rawlinson (Coldstream Guards), and Captain Gerald Fitzgerald (Royal Horse Guards)—and the Royal Artillery (Woolwich)—Captain Powell, Major Cameron, Captain Courage, and Captain Stanley. The game began slowly, and the play was very even at first. The reason of this was that the ground, though looking well, played rather dead. The scoring began in the second ten minutes, and continued to be even, the goals being made alternately. First one side combined and made a goal; then the other side improved, while the first one fell off. The effect of this was that the ball was in each case run nearly the whole length of the ground. Captain Fitzgerald rode off resolutely whenever he had the chance, and I am inclined to think that this affected the result in the end. Yet while watching the game it was difficult to foretell which one would win. The score was even at half-time, and remained so till just towards the end, when Captain Fitzgerald had his chance, and, coming right up into the game, went through the players, and carrying the ball along with three fine clean strokes, hit the goal which practically decided the match in favour of the Household Brigade, with a finely judged stroke. After that the Royal Artillery gave way a little. They were a strong team, but rather

too much given to the vice of modern players—a use of the near-side stroke when the off-side would give more control. Only a few of the best players can control the ball in near-side hitting after the first stroke, and even if the ball is struck on the near-side it is notable how often the direction becomes uncertain at the second or third hit. Once I think the Royal Artillery threw away a goal, and twice gave the ball to their adversaries owing to uncertainty in near-side hitting. As much private practice as possible is useful at the near-side stroke, but in the game the average player is probably unwise to use it unless no other is possible. This match over, we had a Ranelagh team, the Wanderers—Messrs. R. Grenfell, J. Dale, A. Rawlinson, and Comte de Madre—against Ranelagh—Major Morris, Lord Villiers, Mr. F. Gill, and Mr. M. de Las Casas. Two of these players, Messrs. Dale and de Las Casas, had already played in the handicap finals at Hurlingham. Mr. A. Rawlinson has been seen comparatively seldom at polo this year, his interest being divided between the game and the motor-car. He had, indeed, won a cup at Dublin for motor-racing last week. This is a pity for polo, for he remains one of the finest of our players, and is one of the few of the older school still holding his own in first-class polo. Lord Villiers is also a player not very often seen. The Wanderers started well, and at half-time were leading, but they failed to stay, and Ranelagh had the better of the second half, and Major Morris and Mr. Gill playing well for their club, not only hindered the Wanderers from scoring, but put on no less than 4 goals, thus winning by 6 to 4.

While these two matches were played at Ranelagh, at Roehampton was the final of the Public Schools' Cup. This cup is held by Marlborough, and they retained it without much difficulty, having, indeed, a team of overwhelming strength—Captain Jenner, Mr. Sheppard, and Messrs. G. A. and C. D. Miller. It was not therefore surprising that they beat Harrow by 6 goals to 1, which might probably have been more if required. I have for some time kept a private handicap book of the leading players. It is a useful guide to a writer, and the difference between these two teams works out as seven in favour of Marlborough.

As I look back over the polo of the season I feel that space has prevented me from quite doing justice to the other London clubs, the London Polo Club, Eden Park, and Worcester Park, yet I believe each of the three has had a season which, as regards the number of matches and the class of play, has been unusually good. We must recollect of the past season that the weather has diminished the spectators, curtailed the gate-money, and upset the calculations of the managers, but has not prevented polo round London, and in the lesser as well as the greater clubs, being of a high order.

If polo does not make quite so much progress on the Continent as it does in America, England, or her Colonies, yet it is popular among spectators. The International polo meeting at Ostend which began on Tuesday of last week was a great success. The opening tie was, I believe, the first game played in Belgium. In this game both the teams were English, the winners being the Fox-hunters—Lord Harrington, Mr. F. J. Mackey, Mr. F. O. Ellison, and Captain Neil Haig. This team, which it will be noted contained one American, Mr. Mackey, who hunts in Warwickshire, beat the 2nd Life Guards very easily. These are two polo teams from the lately-established club at Buda Pesth, of which Count Andrassy is founder and president and Mr. H. T. Rich secretary and manager.

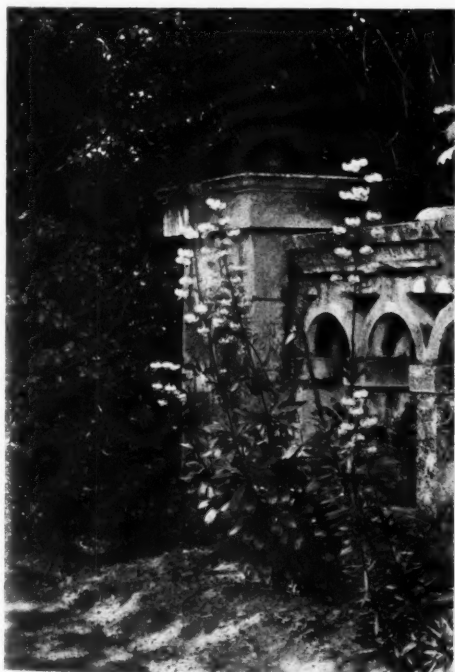
X.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A BALUSTRADE WITH LILIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose you a photograph of a group of white Martagon lilies. They look very well against the fine mason-work.



The balustrade at the back is by Sir Christopher Wren, and was, until a few years since, the cornice round the top of the church tower of St. Dionis in Fenchurch Street.

—S. S. FORD.

DOUBLE NESTS.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent, we have a flycatcher's nest built in an old thrush's nest of last year. The position is on a branch of a cedar tree, and within six yards of the dining-room window, and the young birds are partly fledged.—G. F. TWIST, Coventry.

BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was reading in your last week's issue that there is a great scarcity of certain sorts of birds in the country this year, and it has occurred to me whether there is not also a great scarcity of butterflies, as it seems to me I have seen very few indeed, and I am curious to know whether this is the general experience.—EDWARD JAMES CARTER.

BIRDS THAT HANGED THEMSELVES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The cases of the blackbird and the sparrow that hanged themselves accidentally outside their own nests remind me of an incident that I witnessed here many years ago. Paris is a happy hunting ground for innumerable swifts, attracted, I doubt not, by the facilities for nesting. The lofty houses are, for the most part, faced with stone, and between the stone and the rough material of which the walls are built are holes and crevices which form ideal nesting-places. Such a wall was opposite the window where I sat and watched the goings and comings of a colony of these most interesting birds. One day, to my grief, I saw that a swift, in hurrying itself, as is their wont, at full speed into its nest, almost at the top of a seven-storied house, had caught its head in the narrow crevice and was unable to extricate it. There it hung, fluttering, till its strength was gone, and there for many months hung its remains. While on the subject of birds, it may interest some of your readers to hear of the large variety of birds to be seen within a very short distance of the centre of Paris. Last Sunday at the Ile des Anglais, the English boating and lawn-tennis club, situated on an island in the Seine, and less than two miles, in a straight line, from the Arc de Triomphe, I saw dove, kingfisher, flycatcher, wren, blackcap, redstart, robin, and blackbird, not to mention sparrows and swallows. Within the last few years I have seen there, or on the adjacent island, long-tailed tit, tomtit, golden oriole, woodpecker, magpie, starling, wood-pigeon, small owl, and pheasant, and have heard the nightingale, cuckoo, and partridge. It would be interesting to know what is the nearest point to the centre of London where all these birds, with the exception of the golden oriole, of course, may be seen or heard.—PERCY B. LAMMIN, Paris.

RE GODINTON, KENT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

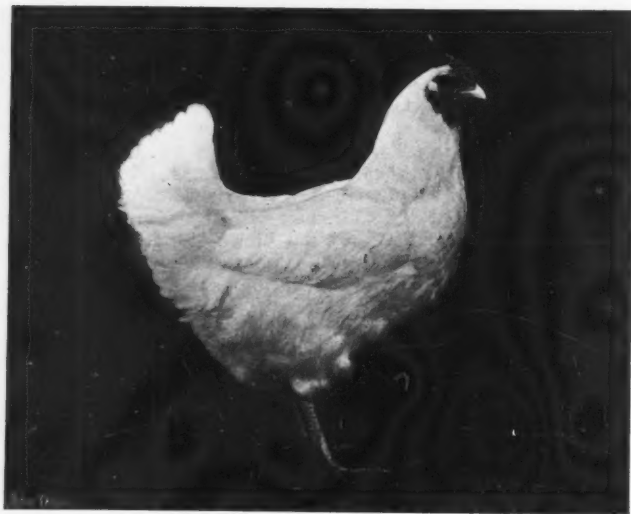
SIR,—In COUNTRY LIFE for July 25th Mr. Ashley Dodd, the owner of Godinton, has called your attention to certain points in the account of this house, which appeared in your issue of July 18th. As architect of the work carried out for Mr. Ashley Dodd, I must appeal to your courtesy to insert these further corrections. Your contributor states that the grounds were laid out by Mr. Driver in 1770. In point of fact the old walled-in kitchen garden, referred to in Mr. Ashley Dodd's letter, is the only part of the old garden remaining. Mr. Driver destroyed the last of the terraces on the east side, and all the pleasure grounds have been remade by Mr. Ashley Dodd since 1896, the whole of the forecourt, terraces, pleasure gardens, and ornamental water, occupying a considerable tract of what used to be the park, having been laid out from my designs. In regard to the house itself, this was enlarged and remodelled by Mr. Ashley Dodd between 1895 and 1897, and one of the principal artistic problems of the work was to purify the house from the interpolations added in the last century by Mr. Nicholas Roundell Tuke. As to the ornamental plaster ceilings, there never were any till the recent ceiling put up in the "white parlour," and throughout the works in the house I never came across any trace whatever of Tudor work. Referring to the account given in your issue of July 18th, I find the great hall referred to as "a noble apartment, etc." So it undoubtedly is; but the work, excepting the tie-beam, is mainly the work of Mr. Tuke of the nineteenth century. The staircase is partly genuine early seventeenth century, but here, again, Mr. Tuke did all he could to spoil it, by inserting incongruous old fragments of his own collections. Some more of these fragments are to be found in "the priest's room," illustrated in COUNTRY LIFE. This room has not yet been dealt with, and I think it is easy to picture from your illustration the state the house was in before it came into the hands of the present owner. As a matter of fact, there is not one single detail in this room that is genuine. Your contributor is pleased to observe that a "later touch will be discovered in the china-room," and suggests Anne or the Georges. The whole of this room—columns, arches, panelling, fireplace and all—is new, and was put up from my designs in 1896. Speaking as a student of history, I am unable to agree with your contributor that the house has been "fortunate in its previous possessors," and it is my deliberate opinion, as architect of the work, that unless the present owner had authorised the very considerable work of repairs carried out since 1895, the house was well on its way to tumbling down.—REGINALD BLOMFIELD.

"A" OR "AN."

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Would any of your literary correspondents kindly enlighten me as to when the indefinite article should be "a" and when "an," as I find that many of our best writers not only differ, but have themselves no fixed rule for this question. Some seem to think that because it is correct to use "an" before "h" mute, as in "hour" and "honour," it must also be so before "h" when aspirated; for instance, some will write "a history," and in the next page "an historical fact." Now, if it is correct to write "an historical fact," it follows that it would be correct to write about "an hat," "an hunter," "an hen," "an human being," which would be absurd. I am aware that in the "Lady of the Lake" Sir Walter Scott wrote "clattered an hundred hoofs along," but I venture to think he was wrong, and that "a hundred" would sound much better, as well as be more correct. If anyone will try to use the

easy to rear as chicks, and of quick growth; layers of fairly large brown-tinted eggs, many of which are produced in winter; not often given to broodiness, but an excellent sitter and mother, it possesses most of the desirable features of the all-round bird. The



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white Wyandotte, one of the latest selections to arrive in this country, came with a great reputation as a layer. In the language of its originators, it was going to "lick creation" in the matter of egg production, and for once the forecast has been sustained. The bird whose photograph is now given is the holder of the record of the laying competitions. She is the property of Miss Tammadge of Thatcham, Newbury, and distinguished herself by laying seventy-eight eggs in ninety-six days, a feat highly commendable, as it occurred at the worst season of the year, viz., October to February. We think this specimen, whose sisters are also prize-winners, affords a notable example of the efficacy of breeding year by year from the best layers only, a plan we have often advocated as the only sure means towards the end. Although a fair type of her kind from an exhibition point of view, she is by no means remarkable for external features. As will be seen, the shape is compact, mounted on moderately short legs. A broad short head, topped by a neat rose comb, with full bright eye, betokens a tendency towards prolific egg production. One of the difficulties in breeding this charming variety is the atavism it exhibits. Being what is known as a "composite breed," that is, arrived at by blending older established kinds, it frequently throws back to the types of its progenitors, and some proportion of the youngsters are sure to develop an undesirable length of back, and single, in place of rose, comb. This fault, however, is yearly decreasing, and with "fixity of type," added to great egg production, white Wyandottes will certainly find many fresh supporters.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS SHOW.

The annual show of the Tunbridge Wells and South-Eastern Counties Agricultural Society took place last week, and was one of the most successful of our summer exhibitions. The show-yard covers twenty acres of ground, and its appearance must have highly gratified those who remember it in the early days of the society, for this is the forty-first year in which the exhibition has been held. It began in a very small way indeed, but this year the sum of £1,600 was paid in prizes. Unluckily one of the depressing rain-storms of which we have had so many during the last year came down on the first day of the show, and in a very literal manner damped the enthusiasm of those who were present. Otherwise everything was perfect, and the collection of Shires especially was one of the best ever seen at Tunbridge Wells. It must have been a subject for congratulation to Mr. Leopold Salomons that he came out first for stallions foaled before 1901 with his massive Norbury Harold. Mr. Salomons also carried off two first prizes with Ruby Glimpse and Norbury Bliss, both of which have been illustrated in *COUNTRY LIFE*. The cattle department of the show was also a very good one, though the judging was delayed by the heavy rain. We were glad to see another local breeder at the front in the shape of Mr. J. Colman, whose splendid heifer, Hawthorn Gem 3rd, was first in her class. Mr. Thorley won in the old bull class with Silver King, and also in the yearling bull class with Ringdale Neill. Sussex cattle and Aberdeen-Angus were very well shown. In Jerseys, Mr. C. W. Armitage's beautiful cow, Farineuse 3rd, came out first, and Mrs. McIntosh's Brompton won the Wadhurst Park Cup in the class for old bulls. There was also an excellent display of Guernseys, but the show of Kerrys and Dexters was rather disappointing. In sheep the Southdowns were a large and good section; so, in a lesser

degree, were the Romney Marshes. In pigs, Major Hiscock brought out a good boar in Manor Grand Duke, and the Duchess of Devonshire won first and second in the young boars with two very fine specimens. It is much to be regretted that the weather stood in the way of a full enjoyment of this very excellent show.

POLO NOTES.

THE chief event of the past week was the first International match between Ireland and England. The All-Ireland Polo Club presented a cup, and the first annual match was played on Thursday last between two representative teams on the well-known ground in Phoenix Park. The Nine Acres is open to the public, and a first-class polo match never fails to draw an enthusiastic crowd of all classes. The Irish people seem to take naturally to polo. They understand the game, and applaud with enthusiasm their favourite players and the more brilliant strokes. No doubt the majority of the spectators would have preferred that the Irish team should have been victorious. Nevertheless they made it plain that they appreciated the fine play of the English team. Besides, after all, the captain of that team, General Rimington, is an Irishman and an Irish Dragoon. He was for some time secretary of the All-Ireland Polo Club, and is a very popular person in Dublin. The Irish four was made up of men picked from the Irish county teams—Mr. P. Connolly and Major O'Hara, County Sligo, and Mr. Watt and Mr. O'Reilly, from Derry and Westmeath respectively. The English team was composed of Lord Shrewsbury, Captain R. Ward, General Rimington, and Mr. Dudley Marjoribanks. With General Rimington to lead them, this was about as strong a four as could be picked, and they proved to be a fast and hard-hitting team. Almost from the first throw in the English team had possession of the ball, and throughout showed marked superiority as goal-hitters. General Rimington and Mr. Marjoribanks both are very hard strikers, and they kept the ball travelling at a pace that taxed the Irishmen. Yet if a side has to work as hard as England undoubtedly had, a victory cannot be called an easy one. There was some very close fighting in the second and third ten-minute periods. I am generally inclined to think that when a side makes a small score it is to be attributed to a strong defence rather than to bad luck. In this case, however, the Irish team ought to have made at least two more goals than they did.

The last week of polo at the London clubs was marked by three finals—the Hurlingham Handicap, the Public Schools' Tournament, and the Ladies' Nomination Cup—and by a fine soldiers' game at Ranelagh, of which more hereafter. The bad weather pursued us to the end, and made the watching of the play, except on Saturday, rather a disagreeable task. There was a first-rate entry for the final handicap at Hurlingham. There was no shifting of players during its course, and the tournament was marked by some excellent play. All the teams save one appeared on the ground. The first tie was played on Tuesday, and was won by A Team—Messrs. B. Wilson, W. Graham, Foxhall Keene, and G. Lockett. This was a fast team, but not very close in its combination or accurate in its passing. They defeated D Team, for which Mr. Buckmaster was playing. This game was a kind of duel between Mr. Keene and Mr. Buckmaster, but the former was in excellent form, making two glorious galloping runs and hitting goals. He had also rather better backing. When A Team met E Team—Mr. W. Burdon, Mr. J. S. Mason, Major F. Egerton Green, and Captain Hobson—there was another brilliant galloping game, but Major Egerton Green and Captain Hobson (both players who understand the game thoroughly) combined well. E Team had the command all through, and A Team (composed as above) seemed to go to pieces, and were defeated 3 goals to 1. Thus E Team met F Team—Messrs. L. Wilson, J. B. Dale, W. Roylance Court, and M. de Las Casas—in the final on Saturday. This team had won their first tie on Wednesday after a very close game. A hard-fought match often has the effect of bringing a team together and improving their combination, and as F Team had a bye on Thursday in the semi-finals, they came into the final on Saturday fresh and vigorous. In consequence they played an excellent game, and Mr. J. Dale, who has been steadily improving and also is always well mounted, being quite in his best form, they simply ran away from E Team, and won by 8 goals to 1. Of course, it must be said that E Team did not come up to their previous play till quite the end of the match, when, of course, it was too late.

It was surprising to find Ranelagh with quite an average Saturday crowd so near the end of the season. But Mr. Gill had arranged two excellent matches, of which the first was a soldiers' game. These military matches always draw spectators, though the Ranelagh band and the lunch may have something to say to this too. In these two matters Barn Elms is easily first. The match was the Household Brigade—Lord Ingestre (Royal Horse Guards), the Duke of Westminster (late Royal Horse Guards), Colonel Sir Henry Rawlinson (Coldstream Guards), and Captain Gerald Fitzgerald (Royal Horse Guards)—and the Royal Artillery (Woolwich)—Captain Powell, Major Cameron, Captain Courage, and Captain Stanley. The game began slowly, and the play was very even at first. The reason of this was that the ground, though looking well, played rather dead. The scoring began in the second ten minutes, and continued to be even, the goals being made alternately. First one side combined and made a goal; then the other side improved, while the first one fell off. The effect of this was that the ball was in each case run nearly the whole length of the ground. Captain Fitzgerald rode off resolutely whenever he had the chance, and I am inclined to think that this affected the result in the end. Yet while watching the game it was difficult to foretell which one would win. The score was even at half-time, and remained so till just towards the end, when Captain Fitzgerald had his chance, and, coming right up into the game, went through the players, and carrying the ball along with three fine clean strokes, hit the goal which practically decided the match in favour of the Household Brigade, with a finely judged stroke. After that the Royal Artillery gave way a little. They were a strong team, but rather

too much given to the vice of modern players—a use of the near-side stroke when the off-side would give more control. Only a few of the best players can control the ball in near-side hitting after the first stroke, and even if the ball is struck on the near-side it is notable how often the direction becomes uncertain at the second or third hit. Once I think the Royal Artillery threw away a goal, and twice gave the ball to their adversaries owing to uncertainty in near-side hitting. As much private practice as possible is useful at the near-side stroke, but in the game the average player is probably unwise to use it unless no other is possible. This match over, we had a Ranelagh team, the Wanderers—Messrs. R. Grenfell, J. Dale, A. Rawlinson, and Comte de Madre—against Ranelagh—Major Morris, Lord Villiers, Mr. F. Gill, and Mr. M. de Las Casas. Two of these players, Messrs. Dale and de Las Casas, had already played in the handicap finals at Hurlingham. Mr. A. Rawlinson has been seen comparatively seldom at polo this year, his interest being divided between the game and the motor-car. He had, indeed, won a cup at Dublin for motor-racing last week. This is a pity for polo, for he remains one of the finest of our players, and is one of the few of the older school still holding his own in first-class polo. Lord Villiers is also a player not very often seen. The Wanderers started well, and at half-time were leading, but they failed to stay, and Ranelagh had the better of the second half, and Major Morris and Mr. Gill playing well for their club, not only hindered the Wanderers from scoring, but put on no less than 4 goals, thus winning by 6 to 4.

While these two matches were played at Ranelagh, at Roehampton was the final of the Public Schools' Cup. This cup is held by Marlborough, and they retained it without much difficulty, having, indeed, a team of overwhelming strength—Captain Jenner, Mr. Sheppard, and Messrs. G. A. and C. D. Miller. It was not therefore surprising that they beat Harrow by 6 goals to 1, which might probably have been more if required. I have for some time kept a private handicap book of the leading players. It is a useful guide to a writer, and the difference between these two teams works out as seven in favour of Marlborough.

As I look back over the polo of the season I feel that space has prevented me from quite doing justice to the other London clubs, the London Polo Club, Eden Park, and Worcester Park, yet I believe each of the three has had a season which, as regards the number of matches and the class of play, has been unusually good. We must recollect of the past season that the weather has diminished the spectators, curtailed the gate-money, and upset the calculations of the managers, but has not prevented polo round London, and in the lesser as well as the greater clubs, being of a high order.

If polo does not make quite so much progress on the Continent as it does in America, England, or her Colonies, yet it is popular among spectators. The International polo meeting at Ostend which began on Tuesday of last week was a great success. The opening tie was, I believe, the first game played in Belgium. In this game both the teams were English, the winners being the Fox-hunters—Lord Harrington, Mr. F. J. Mackey, Mr. F. O. Ellison, and Captain Neil Haig. This team, which it will be noted contained one American, Mr. Mackey, who hunts in Warwickshire, beat the 2nd Life Guards very easily. These are two polo teams from the lately-established club at Buda Pesth, of which Count Andrassy is founder and president and Mr. H. T. Rich secretary and manager. X.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A BALUSTRADE WITH LILIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose you a photograph of a group of white Martagon lilies. They look very well against the fine mason-work.



The balustrade at the back is by Sir Christopher Wren, and was, until a few years since, the cornice round the top of the church tower of St. Dionis in Fenchurch Street. —S. S. FORD.

DOUBLE NESTS.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent, we have a flycatcher's nest built in an old thrush's nest of last year. The position is on a branch of a cedar tree, and within six yards of the dining-room window, and the young birds are partly fledged.—G. F. TWIST, Coventry.

BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was reading in your last week's issue that there is a great scarcity of certain sorts of birds in the country this year, and it has occurred to me whether there is not also a great scarcity of butterflies, as it seems to me I have seen very few indeed, and I am curious to know whether this is the general experience.—EDWARD JAMES CARTER.

BIRDS THAT HANGED THEMSELVES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The cases of the blackbird and the sparrow that hanged themselves accidentally outside their own nests remind me of an incident that I witnessed here many years ago. Paris is a happy hunting ground for innumerable swifts, attracted, I doubt not, by the facilities for nesting. The lofty houses are, for the most part, faced with stone, and between the stone and the rough material of which the walls are built are holes and crevices which form ideal nesting-places. Such a wall was opposite the window where I sat and watched the goings and comings of a colony of these most interesting birds. One day, to my grief, I saw that a swift, in hurling itself, as is their wont, at full speed into its nest, almost at the top of a seven-storied house, had caught its head in the narrow crevice and was unable to extricate it. There it hung, fluttering, till its strength was gone, and there for many months hung its remains. While on the subject of birds, it may interest some of your readers to hear of the large variety of birds to be seen within a very short distance of the centre of Paris. Last Sunday at the Ile des Anglais, the English boating and lawn-tennis club, situated on an island in the Seine, and less than two miles, in a straight line, from the Arc de Triomphe, I saw dove, kingfisher, flycatcher, wren, black-cap, redstart, robin, and blackbird, not to mention sparrows and swallows. Within the last few years I have seen there, or on the adjacent island, long-tailed tit, tomtit, golden oriole, woodpecker, magpie, starling, wood-pigeon, small owl, and pheasant, and have heard the night-ingale, cuckoo, and partridge. It would be interesting to know what is the nearest point to the centre of London where all these birds, with the exception of the golden oriole, of course, may be seen or heard.—PERCY B. LAMMIN, Paris.

RE GODINTON, KENT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In COUNTRY LIFE for July 25th Mr. Ashley Dodd, the owner of Godinton, has called your attention to certain points in the account of this house, which appeared in your issue of July 18th. As architect of the work carried out for Mr. Ashley Dodd, I must appeal to your courtesy to insert these further corrections. Your contributor states that the grounds were laid out by Mr. Driver in 1770. In point of fact the old walled-in kitchen garden, referred to in Mr. Ashley Dodd's letter, is the only part of the old garden remaining. Mr. Driver destroyed the last of the terraces on the east side, and all the pleasure grounds have been remade by Mr. Ashley Dodd since 1896, the whole of the forecourt, terraces, pleasure gardens, and ornamental water, occupying a considerable tract of what used to be the park, having been laid out from my designs. In regard to the house itself, this was enlarged and remodelled by Mr. Ashley Dodd between 1895 and 1897, and one of the principal artistic problems of the work was to purify the house from the interpolations added in the last century by Mr. Nicholas Roundell Toke. As to the ornamental plaster ceilings, there never were any till the recent ceiling put up in the "white parlour," and throughout the works in the house I never came across any trace whatever of Tudor work. Referring to the account given in your issue of July 18th, I find the great hall referred to as "a noble apartment, etc." So it undoubtedly is; but the work, excepting the tie-beam, is mainly the work of Mr. Toke of the nineteenth century. The staircase is partly genuine early seventeenth century, but here, again, Mr. Toke did all he could to spoil it, by inserting incongruous old fragments of his own collections. Some more of these fragments are to be found in "the priest's room," illustrated in COUNTRY LIFE. This room has not yet been dealt with, and I think it is easy to picture from your illustration the state the house was in before it came into the hands of the present owner. As a matter of fact, there is not one single detail in this room that is genuine. Your contributor is pleased to observe that a "later touch will be discovered in the china-room," and suggests Anne or the Georges. The whole of this room—columns, arches, panelling, fireplace and all—is new, and was put up from my designs in 1896. Speaking as a student of history, I am unable to agree with your contributor that the house has been "fortunate in its previous possessors," and it is my deliberate opinion, as architect of the work, that unless the present owner had authorised the very considerable work of repairs carried out since 1895, the house was well on its way to tumbling down.—REGINALD BLOMFIELD.

"A" OR "AN."

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Would any of your literary correspondents kindly enlighten me as to when the indefinite article should be "a" and when "an," as I find that many of our best writers not only differ, but have themselves no fixed rule for this question. Some seem to think that because it is correct to use "an" before "h" mute, as in "hour" and "honour," it must also be so before "h" when aspirated; for instance, some will write "a history," and in the next page "an historical fact." Now, if it is correct to write "an historical fact," it follows that it would be correct to write about "an hat," "an hunter," "an hen," "an human being," which would be absurd. I am aware that in the "Lady of the Lake" Sir Walter Scott wrote "clattered an hundred hoofs along," but I venture to think he was wrong, and that "a hundred" would sound much better, as well as be more correct. If anyone will try to use the

article "an" before a word beginning with an aspirated "h" he will find aspiration difficult, and drop his "h." It seems to me that in all cases when the letter "h" is aspirated, the indefinite article should be "a" and never "an." Again, although the rule is that "an" should be used before words beginning with a vowel, yet there should be an exception when the vowel is "u" long, and pronounced like "you," or "yew," and it should then be "a"; for instance, one would hardly say that an officer wore "an uniform," or that one saw "an yew tree," or hoped for "an union of hearts," yet I certainly read occasionally of "an united family," "an universal rule." When the vowel "u" is short, as in the word "under," then the article should, of course, be "an," as "an undertaker," "an umbrella." Thirdly, can it be right to talk of "such an one"? I certainly find it so written by writers of the highest standing; but as the word "one" is pronounced "won," as in "wonder," surely the article should be "a"; no one would say "what an wonder"! "Such a one" seems to me to be not only more correct, but sounds much better.—PUZZLED SCHOLAR.

A BARREL ORGAN IN A CHURCH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The enclosed photograph shows an old barrel organ that stands in the gallery of Brighton Church, Sussex. Its well-known strains still accompany the departing footsteps of the congregation each Sunday, and the sexton takes as great a pride in his part of the performance—namely, turning the handle—as if he were the greatest of living organists. It would be interesting



to know if there are instruments of a similar kind to be found in other churches.—E. BROUGHTON.

WEED ON PONDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In reply to your enquiry as to the best means of getting rid of the American weed, I can say that if your correspondent can keep swans he will never be troubled with it.—HENRY MATHER-JACKSON.

FOR GOOD OR EVIL?

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent "F. J. M.," my gardener tried the effect of calcium carbide waste as a weed-killer, and found it quite ineffectual. He now spreads it on the soil, and some time afterwards digs it in. It certainly does no apparent harm. Whether it does any good I cannot say. We hope it is destructive of insect life, but there is no evidence that it is. When fresh from the generator it is effective in "stinking out" moles, and I think it might have the same effect with rats. My soil is also extremely light.—J. W. M.

A NOVEL RAT TRAP.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Being troubled with rats for a long time, we could not discover how they came into our yard. By chance we found they came down the inside of a water pipe. A piece of wire netting was loosely but firmly attached to the

bottom of the pipe. The rat coming down was unable to turn round in the pipe. Result, enclosed.—WALLIS JONES, Norwich.

NEST OF THE FLYCATCHER.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Mark Firth's letter, with which he sends an interesting photograph of a flycatcher's nest built inside a thrush's nest, he mentions that although there were five eggs laid, one of which was infertile, only two fully-fledged young birds survived, and he presumes that two eggs must have been taken. I have lately been watching a flycatcher's nest here with four young ones, and I noticed that two of the young ones were always to the front and two behind, those in front being more fledged than those behind. The two forward birds flew two days before the other two, and this may be a habit of the flycatcher so as not to have all her young ones out together. The nest was not at any time disturbed.—ARTHUR H. SYKES, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire.



VARYING TYPES OF BIRDS' EGGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In answer to "Collector," the colour of the eggshell cannot be compared to the colour of hair or skin in children. The ovum in the ovary of the female bird, having been fertilised by the agency of the male, passes down into the oviduct, where it receives its covering of shell. Practically at the same time it is acted upon by pigment glands which produce the colours in the shell. It has been noticed in clutches of eggs that the last one laid is very often noticeably deficient in coloration, as though the pigment had become gradually exhausted. Similarly weak, young, or very old females have been noticed to lay abnormally pale eggs. The question of the law as regards the coloration of eggs is one as yet not solved, and perhaps the article on the "Cuckoo" by Professor Newton, in his "Dictionary of Birds," will give "Collector" some most remarkable observations.—H. S. G.

THE GREY PHALAROPE (CRYMOPHILUS FULICARIUS).

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The accompanying photograph represents two specimens of this exceedingly rare bird. The originals of the picture were shot at Dunrossness, in the south of the Shetland Islands. The phalarope is a genus of wading bird, and belongs to the sub-family of the snipe. Phalaropes are characterised by having lobed toes, not unlike those of the coot. With the aid of these they can swim well, and also run with great swiftness on the shore. There are only three species of the phalarope. They are all migratory, and affect Northern regions, leaving for the South in the winter. The grey phalarope only very occasionally visits Britain, for resting purposes, en route for the South. The bird is much sought after by ornithologists. But the red-necked phalarope (*Phalaropus hyperboreus*), a small, and also a very rare bird, somewhat resembling in appearance the sandpiper, has been known to breed in the southern part of the Shetland Islands for some years.—C. J. H. CASSELS, Crieff, N.B.

[We publish the photograph of these very interesting birds, but are compelled to express regret at their fate.—ED.]

